RESEARCH REPORT 57

Vulnerable Livelihoods in Somali Region, Ethiopia

Stephen Devereux
April 2006

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Acronyms

CSB	Corn soy blend
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DPPB	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FEZ	Food economy zone
GAM	Global acute malnutrition
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
HICE	Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure survey
ICRC	International Committee of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies
IDP	Internally displaced person
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OWDA	Ogaden Welfare and Development Association
OWS	Ogaden Welfare Society
PCAE	Pastoralist Concern Association Ethiopia
PCI	Pastoralist Communication Initiative
SAM	Severe acute malnutrition
SC-UK	Save the Children UK
SERP	South East Rangelands Project
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
SNRS	Somali National Regional State
TBA	Traditional birth attendant
TLU	Tropical livestock unit
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
WMU	Welfare Monitoring Unit

Executive summary

This report is an investigation into the causes and consequences of livelihood vulnerability in Somali Region, Ethiopia. People in this region – pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, farmers and traders – have suffered a series of livelihood shocks in recent years, some natural (droughts, livestock disease), others political (a crackdown on contraband trade, bans by Gulf states on livestock imports, violent conflict between (sub-)clans or between Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) militia and the state). As a result of these multiple shocks, and because rainfall in the Horn of Africa has been low in recent years, questions are being asked about the sustainability of pastoralism as a livelihood system, not only in Somali Region but throughout the Greater Horn of Africa. The Government of Ethiopia, for instance, is advocating rural sedentarisation of pastoralists as one long-term option.

In this highly politicised context, this research study is an attempt to gather information and give voice to the people of Somali Region themselves, and to present this evidence to policy-makers (community leaders, the regional and federal governments, international donors, and international and local NGOs) as an input to their strategising and decision-making. A mixed methodology approach was designed for our fieldwork, including a questionnaire survey of 1,100 households in nine rural districts and two urban centres across the region, ethnographic methods (key informant interviews, life histories, community discussions), market monitoring and semi-structured interviews with traders, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and members of government.

Early during the inception phase of this study, the complexity of livelihood systems in Somali Region became evident to the research team. Four dominant livelihood systems were identified and used as a basis for stratifying the sample, analysing the data and writing up the findings. *Pastoralists* pursue livelihoods dominated by livestock rearing; *agro-pastoralists* pursue a mixed livelihood of both livestock rearing and crop farming; *farmers* live in settled communities and cultivate crops for food and cash income; *urban* residents live in towns and earn their living from formal or informal employment. Two other categories of people discussed in this report are traders (and the range of marketing agents involved, especially in livestock trading) and IDPs.

Although pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, farmers, urban residents, traders and IDPs are treated as distinct livelihood categories for analytical purposes in this report, the boundaries between these categories are not always clear-cut, and it is important to recognise the interdependence of these various groups. The economy of Somali Region is a complex, interconnected system of social networks and political negotiations, where the sustainability or vulnerability of each livelihood depends as much on the individual's interpersonal relationships, and on international geopolitics, as on his or her assets and income at any point in time. In this context, livelihood vulnerability is affected by processes of *social change* (such as a decline in the "gift culture" due to economic stresses and shifting social values), and by *political instability* (from localised conflicts over resources to the expulsion of Ethiopian Somalis from Djibouti). Drought triggers livelihood crises, but the underlying causes of vulnerability in Somali Region are social and political, not natural.

Livelihoods in context

The first section of this report sets the dominant livelihood systems in Somali Region in context, by providing livelihood profiles for each of the 11 districts sampled for the household survey.

Of the three pastoralist districts surveyed, *Gashamo* was the epicentre of the 2004 drought. Paradoxically, given the belief that settling pastoralists may be the best way forward for Somali Region, Gashamo has a number of semi-permanent settlements, but it was the relative immobility that this introduced that caused livestock to die in large numbers in 2004. *Shilabo* is an Ogaden district bordering on Somalia, which prospers from the large Ogadeni diaspora and from cross-border trade. Despite being relatively wealthy in terms of camels and cash, Shilabo is vulnerable to conflict involving the ONLF, government forces and Ogadeni sub-clans. *Shinile*, in the north of Somali Region, is rather cut off and isolated,

which might partly explain why the people of Shinile are poorer than pastoralists in Gashamo and Shilabo. The Issa people of Shinile have close linkages with Djibouti, which itself is poor, rather than with wealthier Somalia or Somaliland.

Agro-pastoralist communities are characterised by competition for farmland as well as water and grazing for livestock, since mobility is restricted by the need to stay near the farm. *Kebribayah* District is located close to the regional capital of Jigjiga, and is a corridor for trade to and from Somalia. It is also the location of Hartisheik, the world's largest refugee camp during Somalia's civil war in the early 1990s, now home to thousands of IDPs displaced by drought or conflict. Families in *Doboweyn* District became agro-pastoralists relatively recently, and have found adjusting to a private property regime problematic. Conflicts occur over access to farmland and the boundaries between individual plots. People in Doboweyn own plenty of livestock, but do not engage in livestock trading and have low cash incomes. Households in *Cherati* District are even poorer. Farming and livestock rearing are mainly for subsistence rather than sale, and tiny incomes are generated by supplementary activities such as making baskets and mats.

Two of our three farming districts are riverine (*Kelafo* and *Dolo Odo*) and one is rain-fed (*Jigjiga*). Farming in Kelafo and Dolo Odo occurs along the Shabelle and Dawa/Ganale rivers respectively, the only two permanent river systems traversing Somali Region. Farmers in both districts are predominantly ethnic Bantu, rather than Somali. They live in a subordinate relationship to local Somalis, and many are sharecroppers on land owned by wealthier Somali businessmen. Despite being politically marginalised and socially excluded, these are peaceful and stable communities. Farmers in Kelafo are rather better off than farmers in Dolo Odo, mainly because Kelafo farmers supply towns in neighbouring Somalia with onions, other vegetables and fruits, while Dolo Odo farmers do not enjoy access to this lucrative market, so supplement their foodcrop production by selling baskets and mats made from riverbank grasses and reeds. Farmers on the Jigjiga plains are ethnic Somalis, and take advantage of higher rainfall and a third rainy season (unique to northern districts of Somali Region) to grow long-maturing crops like wheat, barley and maize.

People in the two urban centres of *Jigjiga* and *Gode* are better off than their rural counterparts in almost every respect. Not only do they enjoy higher average incomes, their incomes are less variable and less vulnerable to unpredictable shocks. They have better access to education and health services, and to clean water, so they are more likely to be literate and are less vulnerable to preventable diseases. They live longer and healthier lives. Women have more autonomy in towns than in rural communities. Urban livelihoods are strikingly diversified, with many people employed in the public sector (government administration, drivers, teachers, nurses), the private sector (retail stores, hotel workers, builders, security guards), or as informal service providers (barbers, tailors). In rural communities, by contrast, alternatives to livestock and crop production are limited to Koranic teachers, traditional healers and minor income-earning activities such as selling firewood or charcoal.

The next two chapters consider livestock- and crop-based livelihood activities in Somali Region. Livestock are owned by most rural households in our survey. Camels, cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys are reared for food, for sale, as pack animals, or as draught power for ploughing. The majority of survey respondents reported declining livestock numbers in recent years, however, due to a combination of recurrent droughts, livestock disease, religious or social contributions of animals as *zakaat* or dowry payment, or to assist poorer relatives. Pastoralist wealth is directly correlated with livestock ownership and exchange, but dependence on this source of wealth emerges as a source of vulnerability, given the susceptibility of livestock to drought and disease. Livestock are unprotected against disease because of the absence of veterinary services, while their owners are unprotected against livestock losses because of the absence of insurance mechanisms, except for limited informal risk-pooling and restocking arrangements among clan relatives.

Livestock marketing, mainly across the border with Somalia and into the Gulf states, generates enormous revenues for livestock owners, traders and marketing agents in Somali Region. The informal marketing system is unregulated, but sophisticated. However, sellers have little power in the market – excess supply means that prices are low, droughts reduce

the supply and quality of animals offered, and export routes are subject to unpredictable but devastating disruption. Three sources of vulnerability in livestock marketing are explored: (1) conflict (traders recall the years of civil war in Ethiopia and Somalia in the early 1990s as the most difficult they have experienced); (2) bans on livestock imports by the Gulf states (following outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever in the Horn in 1998 and 2000); (3) attempts by the Government of Ethiopia to control cross-border trade (the so-called "war on contraband"). Each of these events has blocked exports of livestock to the most lucrative market – Saudi Arabia – sometimes for weeks, at other times for years.

Farming in Somali Region is confined to the banks of the two permanent rivers in the centre and south of the region, and a few districts in the north where rainfall is sufficient to support rain-fed agriculture. Most farming is "low input, low output". Yields are low, marketing opportunities are limited – though some farmers are exporting onions and other cash crops to Somalia – and the risk of crop failure in drought years is high. Sharecroppers and landless households in farming communities are especially vulnerable. Food price seasonality is a particular risk for all farming households. Poorer farmers with undiversified incomes are forced to sell some food crops after harvest to raise cash, and to buy food later in the year at much higher prices. With no access to fertiliser, irrigation equipment, input credit or agricultural extension services, the prospects for farmers in Somali Region look unpromising. In this context, and with most available arable land already allocated and under cultivation, it is difficult to see how much more sedentarisation of Somali pastoralists along the banks of major rivers can be achieved.

Displaced people and refugees, having lost their livelihoods and property and become dependent on social assistance, are internationally recognised as especially vulnerable. Somali Region currently has an estimated 80,000 IDPs, though the numbers fluctuate. Fieldwork for this study included interviews in Hartisheik IDP camp, where conditions were particularly harsh. Food aid had been suspended for six months, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) had withdrawn, sanitation facilities were non-existent, and under-five mortality rates exceeded "emergency" levels. The situation is complicated by the (direct or indirect) dependence of many IDPs on contraband trading. The government's recent crackdown on contraband has elevated livelihood vulnerability in Hartisheik as much as the interruption in food deliveries, reinforcing the urgent need to regulate cross-border trade.

The household survey included questions on incomes earned, which allowed returns to different livelihood activities to be compared, and relative incomes across districts and livelihood systems to be assessed. The most lucrative occupation is trading, with contraband traders enjoying the highest average incomes – albeit at some risk, like all traders in the region. Other high-earning occupations (salaried employment, construction work, carpentry) are mainly open to urban residents. Conversely, the lowest returns are to rural activities that derive from natural products (selling firewood or charcoal, making baskets or mats, beekeeping). Urban incomes are three to four times higher than rural incomes, though the costs of living (rent, electricity, food purchases) are higher in towns. Ranking livelihood activities reveals that rural households derive most of their incomes from a limited and fragile environmental base that is dangerously susceptible to unpredictable fluctuations in the weather.

Pastoralists and farmers earn similar levels of cash income. Overall, agro-pastoralism appears to generate the lowest returns of all livelihood systems in Somali Region. Pursuing livestock rearing and crop farming simultaneously does not spread risk, as both activities are susceptible to erratic rainfall, and appears to generate lower returns than specialising in one or the other. These data on cash incomes are validated by considering food consumption patterns; which confirms that agro-pastoralists have the lowest dietary diversity, while urban households have the highest. Agro-pastoralists also purchase clothes less frequently than other groups, and are least likely to have basic grocery items (salt, sugar, tea, kerosene) in their home.

These different livelihood systems are not pursued in isolation from each other. Most households in Somali Region engage in multiple activities, and making a living requires working with others to an extent that is uncommon elsewhere – for example, in farming communities in the Ethiopian highlands. In a very real sense, the livelihood of one depends

on the livelihood of others. Pastoralists negotiate access to land and water with neighbouring herders and farmers, and sell their livestock into a lengthy marketing chain of traders and intermediaries. Farmers sell their produce to urban residents, who purchase various goods and services from pastoralists, farmers and traders. Relatives living temporarily or permanently abroad in the "Somali diaspora" retain strong linkages with their families, sending back remittances which are invested in the rural economy and urban businesses. The regional economy is closely linked to the economies of neighbouring countries – Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti, Kenya and the Gulf states – and any disruption to the flow of cash, livestock and commodities, either within Somali Region or between the region and the world beyond its borders, constitutes a major threat to many local livelihoods.

Sources of vulnerability

The next section of this report examines different sources and outcomes of livelihood vulnerability in Somali Region. A household survey question on self-assessed vulnerability yields graphic insights into the variability of livelihoods across the region, with rural households experiencing repeated cycles of accumulation, collapse and recovery during the past ten years, as they are hit by drought and other shocks. Two major covariate shocks (affecting entire communities rather than individual households) are revealed as the droughts of 2000 and 2004. In most rural districts surveyed, the 1999/2000 drought emergency is the most significant shock since the mid-1990s, but in Gashamo and Kebribayah the more recent drought dominates. The vulnerability time-lines for Jigjiga and Gode are smoother and less extreme than for rural districts – urban livelihoods do not depend directly on variable rainfall, and urban residents enjoy more stable incomes over time. Jigjiga and Gode towns are also the only two samples where more people admit to 'doing well' than 'struggling'. In every single district, though (both rural and urban), more people claim to be struggling today than ten years ago, which could be a nostalgia effect but could also reflect increasing difficulties in maintaining a viable livelihood.

Premature death is the most extreme outcome of vulnerability, and data collected on mortality in our survey confirms other patterns of vulnerability across and within households, and over time. Rural households suffer almost twice as many deaths as urban households, and four times as many children under five die in rural than in urban households. The number of deaths recorded since 1990 peaked in the drought years of 2000, 2001 and 2004. There is also a strong seasonal effect, with two-thirds of deaths occurring during the dry season months, when times are hardest. Although infant and child mortality rates across the world are directly correlated with poverty, the influence of seasonality and drought on mortality in Somali Region suggests that more complex determinants of vulnerability also need to be considered.

The following four chapters consider different causes of vulnerability, starting with drought, which was identified as the number one risk to livelihoods in all rural areas. Many people believe that droughts are more frequent than in the past, but analysis of long-term rainfall data does not support this perception. A marginal decline in rainfall is observed in northern Somali Region since the 1950s, but in the much drier central part of the region average rainfall has actually increased since the 1970s. The defining characteristic of rainfall in Somali region is its variability from year to year, and there is no evidence that the recent sequence of localised droughts represents a permanent decline in average rainfall. The impact of drought on rural livelihoods in Somali Region is multidimensional. Pastoralists lose their livestock, their main source of wealth, while farmers and agro-pastoralists lose their harvest, their main source of food. Access to food is further undermined by falling "barter terms of trade", as livestock prices fall while food prices rise. Other livelihoods that depend on pastoralist and agricultural incomes, such as traders and service providers, also report facing declining incomes in drought years due to falling demand from pastoralists and farmers for their goods and services. On the other hand, droughts are part of the natural cycle in semi-arid areas, and local livelihoods are sensitively adapted to the certainty that drought will come. If vulnerability to drought is increasing, the reasons have to do with declining ability to cope, rather than increasingly frequent or abnormally severe drought events.

Closely related to drought is access to water, and this study identifies four distinct water systems in Somali Region. (1) In the arid eastern districts, people and livestock depend almost exclusively on *berkad* (constructed water reservoirs), especially during the dry season. Many of these *berkad* are privately owned, and vulnerability can arise from high prices or restricted access to this water. (2) Where adequate groundwater is available, communities dig shallow wells which become their main water supply after rainy season ponds evaporate. These wells are communally managed and no charges are levied, though competition can occur over queuing and access rights. (3) For farming and agro-pastoralist communities living alongside the Shabelle and Dawa/Ganale, these rivers are the primary source of water for people and livestock. The main problem is the health risk of drinking untreated surface water that is shared with animals. (4) Urban centres such as Jigjiga and Gode towns enjoy virtually the only access to piped water (from taps and boreholes) in the region. Unlike rural water supplies, piped water is clean, cheap and reliable all year round.

After drought, conflict is the second major source of vulnerability examined in this report. Conflict and its consequences in Somali Region has a long history and takes many forms, from the waves of refugees during the "Ogaden war" with Somalia in the late 1970s and Somalia's civil war in the early 1990s, to the ongoing struggle of the ONLF for greater autonomy. On a smaller scale, border disputes with Oromiya Region created another wave of displacement around a referendum held in 2004, and violent deaths occurred around the regional elections in August 2005. Away from overtly political conflicts involving armies and militia groups, frequent disputes occur between clans or sub-clans over access to resources – land for farming, grazing and water for livestock. Although indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution do exist, if relations break down these disputes can escalate into violence. An indirect effect of conflict is *aabsi* ('fear of conflict'), which results in migration routes being disrupted and large tracts of contested arable or grazing land lying unutilised for years. In Shilabo District, the potentially lucrative Calub natural gas deposits remain unexploited, because this is an unstable area and control over these resources is disputed between local, national and international stakeholders.

Good governance reduces livelihood vulnerability in many ways – notably, by maintaining peace and security, promoting trade and economic activity, and providing effective social protection or safety nets. Unfortunately, the Somali regional government is weak and ineffective, and the actions of government agents (confiscating basic goods from traders, or withholding food aid from IDP camps) often exacerbate vulnerability. Respondents to our household survey feel that government is ineffective and that their interests are inadequately represented at all levels – local, regional and federal. Governance in Somali Region is complicated by a complex relationship between the state and traditional institutions such as the *Gurti*, a regional council of clan elders. It is not yet clear whether the ongoing process of decentralisation will enable rural communities to articulate their priorities and hold officials and politicians to account, or will only replicate divisive interest group politics at the local level.

Vulnerability in Somali Region is highly gendered. Demographic evidence comes from the 1997 population census and our survey of 1,100 households – both find that sex ratios are heavily skewed towards males. Among the under-25 age cohort, the census enumerated 300,000 more males than females, while older men (over-60s) outnumber older women by 2 to 1. Girls are more likely to die young than are boys, and men in Somali Region live longer than women. Qualitative survey data suggest that parents favour sons over daughters, notably in terms of intra-household allocation of food and access to health care. Although women have less authority within the home and are often channelled into low-income, low-status livelihood activities outside the home, this is changing. As drought has decimated livestock herds, so men's status has diminished and many are reduced to chewing *khat* (a mild stimulant), leaving their wives to find income and food for the family. As their autonomy and responsibility increase, so women's aspirations are rising, and many are looking forward to a brighter future for their daughters.

Responses to vulnerability

The next section is titled 'responding to vulnerability', and includes chapters on household coping strategies, informal transfers, formal safety nets (mainly food aid), health and education services. Our survey finds that households faced with a livelihood shock in Somali Region adopt a similar range of coping strategies to rural households elsewhere in Africa, and in the same sequence. Rationing of food consumption is an immediate and almost universal response to shortage, as it is costless and easily reversible. The second most popular response is to call on support from relatives, which is apparently more available than in other African countries, perhaps because of the range of traditional institutions of mutual support in Somali culture. There are mechanisms for redistributing food (grain, meat, milk, cooked meals), cash (including remittances and *zakaat*), animals, seeds and labour, either on a reciprocal basis or from wealthier to poorer households. These are vital mechanisms for pooling and reducing risk, but many people complain that they are declining in response to recurrent shocks and social change – the perception is that people are both less able and less willing to help each other than in the past. The "circle of responsibility" may be shrinking to one's immediate family, raising the vulnerability of those who are excluded from (declining) community support mechanisms, but have no close relatives to assist them.

Formal safety nets in Somali Region are limited to deliveries of emergency food aid, which have risen dramatically since the late and inadequate response by the government and donors to the drought-famine of 1999–2000. More than a quarter of the region's population has been declared in need of food aid every year since 1999–2000, and over a million tons of grain (mostly imported wheat) has been delivered. At the aggregate level, this has been enough to depress local food prices – creating disincentives for local traders and farmers – but for beneficiary households the amount of food actually received is trivial. Much food aid is misappropriated or mis-targeted. Since Somalis dislike the taste of American wheat, tons of food aid is also sold on local markets. Food aid policy in Somali Region urgently needs to be reconsidered. Food aid deliveries are irregular, unpredictable, inappropriate and ineffective. Even its beneficiaries recognise that food aid is doing more harm than good, and are asking for different types of safety-net assistance (cash transfers, livestock restocking), or even for "developmental" needs to be prioritised instead (support for livelihood diversification, investment in education and health services). New thinking and innovative approaches to social protection in Somali Region are needed.

The poor quality and limited accessibility of health services in Somali Region is demonstrated by high numbers of preventable deaths due to untreated illness, inadequate immunisation coverage, malnutrition and hunger-related disease, and deaths of mothers and infants in childbirth. Almost one in four deaths recorded in our survey occurred in childbirth, an indictment of the lack of reproductive health care in the region. Health clinics are extremely rare in rural areas outside district capitals, and pastoralists have to travel longer distances than agro-pastoralists or farmers to their nearest clinic. One solution to low population density and high population mobility is to deliver services through mobile facilities, and there are mobile vaccination teams that have immunised one in four children in our survey. Significantly, the lowest immunisation rates were recorded in the districts that are most unstable in our survey, which reveals another way in which conflict and instability raises vulnerability – it is bad for children's health.

Education indicators in Somali Region are appalling. In our survey, fewer than one person in five over 15 years old can read and write, and in rural areas only 13 per cent are literate. Literacy is highly gendered – men are three times more likely to be literate than women. In rural districts, female literacy ranges from 7 per cent to just 1.2 per cent. There is no difference between settled farming communities and mobile pastoralists, despite the government's argument that sedentarisation will facilitate the delivery of basic services. The "education deficit" in Somali Region has both supply-side and demand-side determinants. Access to education is constrained by the limited number of schools and teachers (apart from informal Koranic teachers) in rural areas. Our respondents are also very critical of the poor quality of education provided, especially in rural areas. On the demand side, mothers express a stronger interest in educating their children, especially daughters, than do fathers.

Some parents see little need for pastoralists to be educated, but many want their children to have the option to pursue alternative livelihoods, and mothers believe that education will give autonomy to their daughters. Some communities are even raising money to construct school buildings themselves. This makes a powerful case for extending access to good quality education to all children in Somali Region, as part of a strategy to expand livelihood options. The regional government is making concerted efforts to increase education infrastructure and improve the delivery of services in Somali Region – mobile education services are being trialled, for instance – and these efforts must be supported.

Our research concludes that livestock-based livelihoods in Somali Region are relatively lucrative but extremely vulnerable (the "paradox of wealth plus vulnerability"), that this vulnerability is complex and multidimensional, and that the ability of families and communities to cope is being eroded and undermined by multiple interacting stresses. The ability of the Somali Region economy to generate wealth is not in doubt. It is the variability of income generation and asset ownership, and the consequent vulnerability of groups of people within the region, that must be addressed.

While the government is putting considerable energy into new approaches and systems, it has yet to find effective solutions to Somali Region's complex natural and political vulnerabilities. Such solutions will be found not in isolated projects or programmes, but in the wider environment and policy spaces within which people construct their livelihoods. Facilitating what people are already doing requires building on the region's assets, as well as working to reduce risk. Trade, for instance, is arguably the most lucrative source of income across all sectors of the regional economy, but legal constraints are stifling trade rather than maximising the potential of internal and cross-border trade to generate both household incomes and government revenue.

Addressing vulnerability also requires recognising the linkages between the "productive" (or "economic") and "reproductive" (or "social") sectors. For example, investing in education and health services, often undervalued in the past, is now recognised as an essential investment in the productivity and capabilities of people, which expands their opportunities to diversify livelihoods and spread risk. Conflict resolution is another area that is often characterised as "political", but one which has profound implications for livelihoods, in multiple ways.

Cycles of accumulation, collapse and rebuilding are defining features of the pastoralist way of life, but recent shocks and stresses may be stretching coping capacities in Somali Region to breaking point. As the capacity of communities to support their members declines – due to processes of social change as much as economic shocks – so the role of formal social protection interventions increases. But food aid is unpopular and is damaging to farmers' livelihoods. Better designed, more innovative and effectively implemented social protection is vital, not just to provide a safety net in times of crisis, but to provide reassurance that the safety net will be there when needed. Above all, supporting viable livelihoods in Somali Region requires planning for unpredictability, expanding people's options, supporting their cooperation and maximising – not restricting – their physical, economic and social mobility.

Section 1 Context

1 Introduction

This chapter explains the motivation for this study, and the methodology used in the fieldwork.

1.1 Research issues

In 1999–2000 and again in 2004, Somali Region in south-eastern Ethiopia was struck by severe droughts that resulted in numerous deaths of people and livestock, as well as the destitution and displacement of many pastoralist families. Though less internationally visible than the "media famines" that afflicted Ethiopia, including Somali Region, in the 1970s and 1980s, these were the latest in a series of devastating drought-triggered livelihood shocks. Some observers believe that the current sequence of low rainfall years constitutes a permanent decline in rainfall, and some are even predicting the end of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa. These assertions are explored in this report. A more fundamental question, however, is whether the adaptation mechanisms that pastoralists have evolved in response to the predictable threat of drought are collapsing, and what factors are increasing their livelihood vulnerability.

Drought may be the most persistent and comprehensive risk that pastoralists face to their lives and livelihoods, but the people of the Horn have adapted their way of life over many centuries to cope with erratic rainfall – moving with their animals across vast distances, negotiating access to pasture with neighbouring clans, establishing sophisticated trading systems that provide access to lucrative markets in the Gulf states while spreading risk among numerous market agents. As a result, pastoralists and traders in the Horn of Africa, despite being politically marginalised and living in a highly vulnerable drought- and conflict-prone region, have become relatively wealthy.

In recent years, however, a new set of risks has threatened the economic viability of livestock-based livelihoods in Somali Region. Government policies, both domestic and by other countries, have disrupted trade and blocked vital flows of cash and commodities. These policies include a ban by Saudi Arabia on livestock imports from the Horn of Africa, and a "war on contraband" (informal cross-border trade) by the Ethiopian Government. The Somali Region economy, being oriented outwards towards the Middle East rather than inwards towards Addis Ababa, has few "coping strategies" in response to these unpredictable policy shocks.

This combination of "natural stresses" and "policy shocks" strikes at the two key components of the pastoralist economy – livestock production and livestock marketing, respectively – and together they have raised the inherent vulnerability of rural livelihoods in Somali Region to unsustainable levels. Many pastoralists have abandoned their way of life, having lost all their livestock, and fled to towns or internally displaced person (IDP) camps, where the men chew *khat* while women struggle to scrape a living selling firewood. Many traders have been forced out of trading, and many businesses have closed down.

In this context, fundamental questions have been raised about the future of pastoralism in Ethiopia. The government has articulated its view that pastoralism is increasingly untenable, and that "sedentarisation" is the only sustainable long-term option. Opposing this view, supporters of pastoralism argue that livestock herders and traders will survive their current difficulties by applying their ingenuity to negotiate ways around the new hazards they face, as they have always done in the past. A third way forward would be for the government together with the people of Somali Region to explore innovative options, which could involve moving towards a more diversified mixed economy.

This discourse around the future of pastoralism in Ethiopia is largely rhetorical and uninformed by empirical evidence. Very few research studies have been conducted in Somali Region – even the last population census was inadequate and had to be done twice. The present study is the

most extensive to be undertaken in the region for many years. The overall objective of this research is to improve the understanding of livelihood vulnerability in Somali Region, among people in the region as well as among those in federal government and international agencies, in order to contribute to a more informed debate and improved policy-making.

1.2 Structure of this report

This research report is structured around the analysis of livelihood vulnerability in Somali Region. It is divided into five sections.

Section 1: Context provides an introduction to the study. Chapter 1 describes the methodology, while Chapter 2 introduces Somali Region in terms of its demographic structure, and sets the region in national context by comparing indicators of poverty across regions in Ethiopia.

Section 2: Livelihoods examines how the people of Somali Region make a living. Chapter 3 provides brief district livelihood profiles for each of the 11 districts surveyed in this research. Chapter 4 discusses pastoralist livelihoods – livestock rearing and marketing – focusing on livelihood risks presented by shocks such as droughts, Saudi import bans, and Ethiopian border closures. Chapter 5 discusses crop farming and agro-pastoralism in Somali Region. Chapter 6 considers the situation of a particularly vulnerable category of people – internally displaced persons (IDPs) – through interviews conducted in Hartisheik IDP camp. Chapter 7 presents household survey data on cash incomes and inequality, and livelihood activities.

Section 3: Vulnerability looks more closely at causes and outcomes of vulnerability in Somali Region. Vulnerability outcomes presented in Chapter 8 include mortality statistics and trends in self-assessed vulnerability by survey respondents. Causes of vulnerability are divided into three clusters and examined in Chapters 9 to 12: environmental (drought), political (conflict, also failures of governance and representation) and socio-cultural (gender bias).

Section 4: Responding to vulnerability disaggregates various approaches to addressing livelihood vulnerability into formal and informal responses. Chapter 13 analyses the range of "coping strategies" that people in Somali Region adopt when faced with drought or other livelihood shocks. Chapter 14 elaborates on one category of coping strategies, namely informal support provided by relatives and friends. Chapter 15 switches the focus to formal transfers provided by the government and non-governmental agencies (NGOs), including food aid and other "safety nets". Finally, Chapter 16 and Chapter 17 examine the provision of health and education services in Somali Region – the serious inadequacy of these public services is seen as contributing to raising immediate and long-term vulnerability in several ways.

Section 5: *Conclusions* summarises the findings of this research and offers some implications for policy.

1.3 Methodology

This section summarises key features of the methodology: the research methods that were designed and implemented (a household questionnaire survey, a trade and marketing survey and qualitative research), the sampling frame, the conduct of the fieldwork, and the consultation process and workshops held during the study.

1.3.1 Research methods

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was developed to undertake this research. Because so little rigorous fieldwork has been conducted in Somali Region, estimating incomes, livestock ownership, mortality and other quantifiable indicators of household well-being was an important objective of this study. On the other hand, the centrality of conflict, politics, gender and social relations as determinants of well-being outcomes necessitated a qualitative and contextual analysis, as well as an understanding of trends in vulnerability over time.

The quantitative and qualitative research instruments were designed in collaboration with the fieldwork teams in two week-long training sessions in Jigjiga and Addis Ababa, during which the methods were discussed, pilot tested in rural communities, and revised several times before being finalised. After the first leg of the fieldwork (in three districts), preliminary findings were presented at workshops in Jigjiga and Addis Ababa, where further issues were raised that were incorporated into a modified research design for the remaining legs of the fieldwork.

Table 1.1 **Summary of household questionnaire**

A.1	*Household profile:* household structure (monogamous/polygamous, male- or female-headed); sex, age, education and labour capacity of household members; present/absent in last week.
A.2	*Deaths in the household:* since 1991, by age, sex, year/season and cause of death.
A.3	*Child immunisation:* BCG, polio, DPT, measles.
B	*Household livelihood activities:* undertaken by each household member in last 12 months (from a list of over 65 activities identified during training and pilot testing); income earned; livelihood problems; changes in livelihood activities (past to present, deviation from parents).
C	*Crop farming:* land ownership and access; water sources/irrigation; use of fertiliser/manure; most recent harvest (crops grown, consumed and sold); comparison with previous harvests.
D	*Livestock:* access to pasture, water, veterinary services and drugs; livestock owned (camels, cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys); changes in ownership in last ten years; reasons for changes.
E	*Water:* sources of water for household use and livestock, by rainy/dry seasons.
F	*Health and education:* nearest clinic/school; school attendance by children.
G.1	*Informal transfers:* receipt of remittances, *zakaat*, other support from relatives/community.
G.2	*Access to support networks:* sources of support (cash, food, work).
G.3	*Zakaat:* most recent payment and/or receipt of *zakaat*.
H	*Formal transfers:* assistance received from government or aid agencies in last three years (food aid, food/cash-for-work, faffa (supplementary food for young children), credit, seeds/tools, livestock).
I	*Coping strategies:* behavioural adjustments adopted during livelihood shocks (e.g. drought).
J	*Impacts of conflict:* loss of life, livestock, access to grazing/water due to conflict since 1991; beneficiaries of recent conflict; conflict resolution agents; compensation paid and/or received; fairness and effectiveness of government representation at local/regional/national levels.
K	*Food security:* meals per day (adults/children) during most recent hungry season.
L	*Clothing and basic items:* purchases of new/used clothes in last three years for adults/children); presence of basic groceries (salt, sugar, tea, kerosene) in house at time of interview.
M	*Self-assessment of household situation:* self-reported livelihood status (on a 4-point scale) at the time of interview, for each of the last three years, and ten years ago.
O	*Food consumption:* food items consumed in the last week, and source of each food item (production, purchase, food aid, gift).

Household questionnaire survey

The household survey questionnaire was 17 pages long, divided into 18 sections and translated into Somali, partly as a reference guide for the enumerators, and partly for distribution to officials and elders in the field. The household survey team, comprising a supervisor and four or five enumerators, administered this questionnaire to 1,100 *households*. Each interview lasted, on average, 45–50 minutes. The full questionnaire is annexed; Table 1.1 provides a summary.

Qualitative research

The qualitative research team consisted of a Somali specialist, a gender specialist, a specialist in participatory methods and a translator. The issues explored in depth by the qualitative team were wide-ranging, and included the following:

1. ***Informal institutions:*** trends in traditional mechanisms of social assistance, conflict resolution and natural resource management; clan structures, *Dia* clan groups and elders (the *Gurti*).
2. ***Community-level inequalities:*** local social structures; inclusion and exclusion of different groups within communities from key decision-making processes (e.g. food aid allocations).
3. ***Formal political structures:*** activities and functions of regional and local government, process of decentralisation, local provision of services (education, health, veterinary, food aid).
4. ***Livelihoods:*** livelihood strategies, trends and constraints; activities of rich and poor women and men; impacts of drought and conflict; future of pastoralism, migration and urbanisation.

Standard qualitative research methods were used in this fieldwork: semi-structured community discussions and focus group discussions, key informant interviews and individual case studies. Several participatory methods were also used to generate information or facilitate discussion, including community mapping and wealth ranking, seasonal calendars and historical time-lines.

The gender specialist on the team conducted community discussions, focus group discussions and life history interviews with women, men and children on gender-specific topics, including:

1. ***Livelihoods:*** "women's work" versus "men's work"; women traders; gendered ownership of livestock and property; drought impacts and gendered coping strategies; gendered access to resources (credit, food aid, etc.); aspirations for children's future livelihoods.
2. ***Gender roles:*** intra-household (decision-making power, spheres of responsibility); within the community (conflict resolution, community committees, savings groups); consequences of being widowed or divorced; trends over time (impacts of "modernisation", conflict, etc.).
3. ***Education and health:*** gendered access for sons and daughters; adult literacy; HIV/AIDS.

It must be emphasised that most of the gender work was conducted in Gashamo, in a deliberate effort to capture experiences and responses to the recent drought which had its epicentre in that district. The views expressed by the women of Gashamo reflect the exceptional stress they were facing at the time, and should not be interpreted as representative of women in Somali Region as a whole.

Trade and marketing survey

This fieldwork team consisted of a livestock-marketing specialist and two assistants. In addition to the mobile team, price monitors were hired and stationed at four major markets for three months, collecting prices and volumes offered and sold on a daily basis. Among the topics explored in interviews with traders, marketing agents and bureaucrats, as well as through direct observation, were the following:

1. ***Major trade routes:*** volumes of commodity flows (livestock, livestock products, cereals, other food, *khat*, charcoal, clothes); significance of ports (Berbera, Bosaso) for export markets.
2. ***Mapping of main markets:*** location (geo-referenced using global positioning system (GPS) units); commodities traded, market frequency (daily, weekly); trade volumes (per market day, monthly or per annum).
3. ***Evolution of trade routes:*** effects of border closures, export bans, droughts, clan disputes; changes in transportation; emerging markets and new trade corridors.
4. ***Constraints to trade and traders:*** economic (lack of credit or working capital); bureaucratic (border controls, export bans, taxation); entry barriers (cartels, male/clan monopoly); conflict.
5. ***Marketing margins:*** transactions costs (transport, taxes, agent fees); the roles of marketing agents; price differentials, seasonality, and inter-annual variability.
6. ***Market prices:*** daily monitoring of livestock and cereal prices in four major markets (Jigjiga, Gode, Hartisheik, Tog Wachale) in Somali Region.

1.3.2 Sampling

Generating robust empirical statistics for Somali Region requires a statistically representative sampling frame, which implies relating the sample size to the regional population, and applying stratifying rules for disaggregating the regional population into representative sub-samples. Unfortunately, both these prerequisites are hampered by information and access constraints. First, there are no credible estimates of the population of Somali Region, either in aggregate or at sub-regional (zonal, district, rural and urban) levels. The most recent census was conducted in September 1997 (FDRE 1998), after the data collected in this region during the 1994 National Population and Housing Census were rejected as unreliable. The 1997 re-census was equally controversial, and although it represents the best approximation of the population of Somali Region currently available to researchers and policy-makers, it provides no basis for constructing a credible sampling frame.[1] Second, difficulties of accessing several districts within Somali Region, either because of security concerns ("no-go" areas controlled by armed militia) or because of logistical constraints (lengthy travelling distances in difficult and sparsely populated terrain), makes implementing a random survey problematic and sometimes dangerous.[2]

It follows that it is not possible to implement a sample survey of sufficient size and randomness to be statistically representative of the entire region. Accordingly, the statistics presented in this report should be regarded as indicative of conditions observed in the households surveyed,

1 Re-census statistics for Somali Region remain contested due to the lack of clarity around regional boundaries (Somali has several contested borders with neighbouring Oromiya and Afar regions), the high mobility of the population, both within the region and across international borders (with Somalia to the east and Kenya to the south), security concerns which prevented enumeration of eight rural *kebeles* (in Shinile, Fiq, Gode and Afder Zones), and anecdotal reports that enumerators made no effort to visit rural areas outside district capitals. (On a field trip to Guradamole District in May 2004, we were told that the Census figure of around 3,000 residents was under-enumerated by at least a factor of 10, and that the actual population as of 2004 might be in excess of 100,000.)

2 Even after fieldwork started for this project, reports of violent clashes caused us to substitute two districts included in the original sampling frame, out of concern for the safety of our fieldwork team.

Table 1.2 **Sampling frame for the household survey in Somali Region**

Livelihood System	*Area*	*District*	*Zone*	*Food economy zone*
Pastoralism	**North**	**Shinile**	**Shinile**	**Shinile Pastoral FEZ**
	North	Gashamo	Degahbur	Lowland/Hawd Pastoral FEZ
	Central	Shilabo	Korahe	Lowland/Hawd Pastoral FEZ
Agro-pastoralism	**North**	**Kebribayah**	**Jigjiga**	**Jigjiga Agro-pastoral FEZ**
	Central	Doboweyn	Korahe	Korahe Agro-pastoral FEZ
	South	Cherati	Afder	Liban/Afder Agro-pastoral FEZ
Crop farming	**North**	**Jigjiga (rural)**	**Jigjiga**	**Jigjiga Sedentary Farming FEZ**
	Central	Kelafo	Gode	Shabelle Riverine FEZ
	South	Dolo Odo	Liban	Dawa/Ganale Riverine FEZ
Urban	**North**	**Jigjiga town**	**Jigjiga**	**n/a**
	Central	Gode town	Gode	n/a
IDPs	North	Kebribayah	Jigjiga	(Hartisheik IDP camp)

rather than being representative of Somali Region as a whole. For instance, no attempt is made to generate internationally standardised estimates of poverty headcounts for the region.

Given these methodological constraints, a sampling strategy based on livelihood systems was designed, rather than a stratified random sample based on population size at zone or district level. Following the food crisis of 1999–2000, when lack of adequate information was identified as one reason for the delayed humanitarian response, Save the Children UK (SC-UK) and the regional Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB) divided Somali Region into 15 'food economy zones' (FEZ).[3] Of the 15 FEZ, six are categorised as pastoralist zones, six as agro-pastoralist zones, and three as crop farming zones. To ensure adequate coverage of these three livelihood systems in our survey, three pastoralist, three agro-pastoralist and three farming food economy zones were purposively selected. A second criterion was to disperse the survey sites as widely across the region as possible, so Somali Region was divided into four geographic areas – north, central, south and east – and food economy zones were selected from each area. Significant differences within livelihood systems are also reflected in this selection. Among the pastoralist sub-samples, Gashamo and Shilabo are both camel-dominated and Shinile is cattle-dominated. Among the farming communities, Kelafo and Dolo Odo are riverine and Jigjiga is rain-fed.

Apart from rural livelihood systems, two other population groups were included in the sampling frame: urban residents and IDPs. About 14 per cent of Somali Region's approximately four million inhabitants live in urban areas, and the two biggest towns in the region – Jigjiga and Gode – were purposively selected. In May 2004 Somali Region had 88,000 people who had been displaced from their homes, lost their livelihoods, and were living in camps (79 per cent drought-induced and 21 per cent conflict-induced). Instead of a quantitative survey, more than 20 in-depth life history interviews were conducted with IDPs in Hartisheik camp in Kebribayah District. Plans to conduct interviews in other IDP camps had to be abandoned due to security problems. In Denan IDP camp, for instance, violent clashes caused four deaths in the week before the survey team was due to conduct interviews in the camp.

The nine selected food economy zones are listed in Table 1.2, along with the two urban samples and the IDP camp where interviews were conducted. This sample covers seven of Somali Region's nine administrative zones, as well as the two major urban centres and the largest IDP camp.

3 A 'food economy zone' (FEZ) is defined as 'a group or population that obtains its food and income sources from a broadly similar combination of means and that have similar response to shocks' (SC-UK 2001a: 6).

1.3.3 Fieldwork

Three teams of researchers conducted the fieldwork: (1) a household survey team; (2) a trade and marketing survey team; and (3) a qualitative research team. Because of the distances and logistical complexity of conducting fieldwork in Somali Region, as well as constantly evolving security concerns in different districts, the household survey was conducted in four legs over a period of eight months, as follows:

- ***First leg (North 1):*** Gashamo (pastoralist); Kebribayah (agro-pastoralist); Jigjiga town (urban) (October–November 2004).
- ***Second leg (Central):*** Kelafo (farming); Shilabo (pastoralist); Doboweyn (agro-pastoralist); (February–March 2005).
- ***Third leg (South):*** Cherati (pastoralist); Dolo Odo (farming); Gode town (urban) (April 2005).
- ***Fourth leg (North 2):*** Shinile (pastoralist); Jigjiga plains (farming); Hartisheik (IDPs) (May 2005).

Within each of the 11 rural and urban sub-samples, 100 households were interviewed from several randomly selected sites within the district. (The procedure for identifying households in pastoralist areas was to divide the district into four blocks, to set up "base camp" in the centre of each block and from there to drive in a different direction each day until a settlement or *rer* was encountered, where five households would be randomly approached, until 100 questionnaires were completed. In settled communities, discussions with knowledgeable elders and district administrators generated lists of villages, which were stratified to reflect the clan composition, population concentrations and livelihood diversity within the district.) Given the difficulty of obtaining accurate estimates of total population by food economy zone, a sample of 100 is large enough to make general statements about conditions in that FEZ or town – without, however, claiming statistical representativeness. The total sample size for the household survey, therefore, was 1,100, comprising 300 pastoralist households, 300 agro-pastoralist households, 300 farming households and 200 urban households.

The qualitative research team travelled to most of the communities where the household survey team was working, to ensure comparability of findings. However, to deepen our understanding of the impacts of the 2004 drought on pastoralist livelihoods and on gender relations, the qualitative team spent more time in Gashamo District, the epicentre of the drought. The trade and marketing survey team did not accompany the other teams, but interviewed traders and monitored markets along trade routes throughout Somali Region, as well as across the border in Somaliland and Kenya, and in Addis Ababa.

1.3.4 Consultation processes and workshops

The principal Government of Ethiopia partners for this study are the Ministry of Federal Affairs and the Regional Administration of Somali National Regional State (SNRS). Key officials in Addis Ababa and Jigjiga were briefed and consulted about the project before it started, and were kept fully informed at all stages. Since the study was undertaken on behalf of the people of Somali Region, the *Gurti* and other representatives of the clans and districts of the region were also consulted at regular intervals. In the inception phase between January and August 2004, many meetings were held in Jigjiga town and a series of scoping visits was undertaken throughout the region, to sensitise local people to the study and to gather baseline information.

A consultation workshop, titled 'Food Insecurity and Livelihood Vulnerability in Somali Region', was held in the Regional Government Administration Hall in Jigjiga town, on 12 February 2004, to introduce this project to relevant stakeholders in Somali Region. This workshop attracted over 60 participants and was attended by regional government officials, local and

international NGOs, and representatives of all major clans and zones in Somali Region. The project was introduced to stakeholders in Addis Ababa in a public seminar, organised by the Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI) and held at the Sheraton Hotel on 16 February 2004, titled 'Food Security Issues in Ethiopia: Comparisons and Contrasts between Lowland and Highland Areas' (Devereux 2004). This seminar was covered by the BBC Somali Service and generated debate on Somali internet chat-rooms. A follow-up workshop on 'Food Security Issues in Ethiopia' was held at the Sheraton Hotel on 12 May 2004, which focused specifically on food security issues, policies and safety nets in lowland areas.

After the first phase of fieldwork was completed, two report-back workshops were held to present and discuss the preliminary findings, the first in Jigjiga (Regional Government Administration Hall, 19 January 2005), the second in Addis Ababa (Ghion Hotel, 21 January 2005). Feedback from these workshops was used to refine the methodology for the second phase of fieldwork. A four-page 'Issues Paper' was also produced after the first phase (published by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), March 2005), and widely circulated in Addis Ababa and Somali Region.

Policy issues arising from the research were discussed at a donor round-table in Addis Ababa on 25 April 2005. Presentations of findings were also made at the UNOCHA and Department for International Development (DFID) Ethiopia offices in Addis Ababa, and at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Sussex in Brighton, in July 2005. Following publication of this Research Report, a range of dissemination and follow-up activities are planned during 2006.

2 Somali Region: the place and the people

2.1 Population and demography in Somali Region

According to the (contested) 1997 Census, Somali Region consists of 9 administrative zones, 44 *woredas* (administrative districts), and 67 urban settlements.[4] The regional population was enumerated at 3.5 million in 1997, of whom 1.9 million were male and 1.6 million were female.[5] The region is overwhelmingly rural – even Jigjiga town, the regional capital, had a population of well under 100,000 in 1998, though the local administration estimates that this had risen to 150,000 by 2003. The level of urbanisation is low, at 14.3 per cent.[6] Household size, averaging 6.6 – with a range from 5.3 in urban Jigjiga to 8.6 in rural Korahe Zone – is larger than in highland regions, where nuclear household units are the norm. There are approximately 520,000 households in Somali Region.

The largest zone is Jigjiga, with over 800,000 residents enumerated in 1997, while the smallest is Fiq, with 233,000 (see Table 2.1). Somali Region is linguistically and religiously homogeneous – Ethiopian Somalis accounted for 96 per cent of the enumerated population in 1997, and 98.7 per cent of the population is Muslim (FDRE 1998, Table 2.12, Table 2.17).

The average household size in our Somali survey is 8.1 (n=8,806/1,091). This is somewhat higher than the Census average of 6.6 (though the Census did record an average of 8.6 household members in one zone, as noted above). However, it should also be noted that people in Somali Region feel strongly that the local population was systematically under-

4 Even these numbers are controversial: different maps of Somali Region show a range of districts, from 44 to 51. The figure currently accepted as most accurate is 48 districts.

5 This sex ratio of 120 males per 100 females is unusual for Africa, though whether this reflects systematic bias or gender discrimination against females is unclear.

6 Since the definition of a "town" in Ethiopia is a settlement of 500+ people, and the smallest enumerated town in Somali Region had just 590 inhabitants in 1997 (FDRE 1998: 15), even 14.3 per cent might be seen as an overestimate of the true level of urbanisation.

Table 2.1 **Population of Somali Region, 1997 (ranked by zone population size)**

Administrative zones	Total		Rural		Urban	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*
Jigjiga	813,200	23.6	657,309	80.8	155,891	19.2
Liban	476,881	13.9	432,062	90.6	44,819	9.4
Afder	358,998	10.4	333,251	92.8	25,747	7.2
Shinile	358,703	10.4	305,329	85.1	53,374	14.9
Gode	327,156	9.5	256,657	78.5	70,499	21.5
Warder	324,308	9.4	299,627	92.4	24,681	7.6
Degahbur	304,907	8.9	247,041	81.0	57,866	19.0
Korahe	242,276	7.0	205,050	84.6	37,226	15.4
Fiq	233,431	6.8	210,824	90.3	22,607	9.7
Somali Region	**3,439,860**	**10.4**	**2,947,150**	**85.7**	**492,710**	**14.3**

Source FDRE (1998, Table 2.1).

enumerated in the 1997 Census. If there is any substance to this allegation, and assuming our survey is both accurate and representative, then our survey data would suggest that the true population is 22.7 per cent higher than the official Census figure, which would give a total population for Somali Region in 1997 of 4,221,500.[7]

Households in our survey are largest in the "pure pastoralist" district of Gashamo (with close to ten members), while the smallest households are found in the urban centres of Jigjiga and Gode (7.1) and in Shinile (6.9) (Table 2.2). These households are larger than is typical for other regions of Ethiopia, such as the highlands of Amhara and Tigray. The reasons for these differentials are mainly socio-cultural: polygamy is practised more among Muslim lowlanders than among predominantly Christian highlanders, and pastoralists tend to live in extended families while crop farmers in Ethiopia tend to favour nuclear households. Within Somali

Figure 2.1 **Map of Ethiopia, showing Somali Region**

7 This is based on a comparison of average household sizes in the Census and our survey. Our sample is not comprehensive enough to allow an estimation of the regional population in 2004/5.

Table 2.2 **Household size and composition, by district**

District	Household size	Males	Females	Sex ratio*	Female-headed	Polygamous
Pastoralist	**8.4**	**1,321 (52.3%)**	**1,203 (47.7%)**	**110.5**	**5%**	**17%**
Gashamo	9.7	492 (51.1%)	471 (48.9%)	104.5	8%	29%
Shinile	6.9	370 (53.7%)	319 (46.3%)	116.0	5%	5%
Shilabo	8.6	459 (52.5%)	413 (47.4%)	111.1	3%	17%
Agro-pastoral	**8.5**	**1,237 (49.4%)**	**1,265 (50.6%)**	**102.0**	**4%**	**19%**
Kebribayah	8.2	400 (50.5%)	392 (49.5%)	102.0	5%	19%
Doboweyn	8.9	423 (48.7%)	445 (51.3%)	95.1	3%	20%
Cherati	8.4	414 (49.2%)	428 (50.8%)	96.7	3%	19%
Farmer	**8.0**	**1,254 (52.2%)**	**1,149 (47.8%)**	**109.1**	**4%**	**15%**
Kelafo	8.5	429 (50.7%)	417 (49.3%)	102.9	7%	21%
Dolo Odo	8.3	440 (53.3%)	386 (46.7%)	114.0	1%	18%
Jigjiga rural	7.3	385 (52.7%)	346 (47.3%)	111.3	3%	7%
Urban	**7.1**	**700 (50.8%)**	**677 (49.2%)**	**103.4**	**13%**	**6%**
Jigjiga town	6.7	347 (51.6%)	325 (48.4%)	106.8	15%	4%
Gode	7.1	353 (50.1%)	352 (49.9%)	100.3	10%	8%
Total	**8.1**	**4,512 (51.2%)**	**4,294 (48.8%)**	**105.1**	**6%**	**15%**

* Sex ratio = males x 100/ females.
Source: Household survey data (n=1,091).

Region, urban households are typically smaller than rural households. This pattern is found the world over – fertility rates are generally higher in rural communities, for a variety of economic and socio-cultural reasons.

Over 90 per cent of households in our survey are male-headed, while less than 6 per cent are female-headed (n=63/1,091 =8 per cent). Female-headed households are an urban more than a rural phenomenon – in Jigjiga town, one household in seven is female-headed, and in Gode town one in ten, while in Dolo Odo the figure is only one in a hundred. Conversely, polygamy in Somali Region is more rural than urban: while almost one household in six in our sample is polygamous (n=167/1,091 =5.3 per cent), the figure is only one in 25 in urban Jigjiga, but close to one in three in Gashamo (29 per cent), and one in five in Kelafo, Doboweyn, Kebribayah and Cherati (Table 2.2).

Sex ratios in our sample are biased towards males, with 105 males for every 100 females. Male bias is highest in Shinile (at 114), and lowest in Doboweyn (95) and Cherati (97), where females

Table 2.3 **Males per 100 females in Somali Region, by age cohort**

Cohort	Survey	Census	Cohort	Survey	Census
0–4	92.7	113.3	40–44	88.8	103.3
5–9	116.5	123.8	45–49	127.9	113.7
10–14	129.8	136.3	50–54	154.1	131.9
15–19	117.1	142.7	55–59	172.2	164.4
20–24	92.9	127.8	60–69	186.0	204.6
25–29	60.3	85.2	70–79	156.3	213.2
30–34	78.2	78.9	80+	118.2	173.1
35–39	100.0	73.6			

Source: Census and household survey data.

Table 2.4 **Absentee household members, by district***

District	Absentees	Ethiopia	Abroad	Males	Females
Pastoralist	**206 (8.1%)**	**134 (65%)**	**72 (35%)**	**108 (52%)**	**98 (48%)**
Gashamo	90 (9.2%)	42 (47%)	48 (53%)	46 (51%)	44 (49%)
Shinile	44 (6.4%)	28 (64%)	16 (36%)	24 (54%)	20 (46%)
Shilabo	72 (8.2%)	64 (89%)	8 (11%)	38 (53%)	34 (47%)
Agro-pastoral	**223 (8.9%)**	**189 (85%)**	**34 (15%)**	**110 (49%)**	**113 (51%)**
Kebribayah	55 (7.0%)	44 (80%)	11 (20%)	28 (51%)	27 (49%)
Doboweyn	87 (10.0%)	76 (87%)	11 (13%)	42 (49%)	45 (51%)
Cherati	81 (9.6%)	69 (85%)	12 (15%)	40 (49%)	41 (51%)
Farmer	**205 (6.8%)**	**173 (84%)**	**32 (16%)**	**107 (52%)**	**98 (48%)**
Jigjiga rural	104 (7.4%)	86 (83%)	18 (17%)	55 (53%)	49 (47%)
Kelafo	42 (5.0%)	37 (88%)	5 (12%)	21 (50%)	21 (50%)
Dolo Odo	59 (7.1%)	50 (85%)	9 (15%)	31 (53%)	28 (47%)
Urban	**141 (5.8%)**	**118 (84%)**	**23 (16%)**	**72 (51%)**	**69 (49%)**
Jigjiga town	104 (7.4%)	86 (83%)	18 (17%)	54 (52%)	50 (48%)
Gode	37 (5.2%)	32 (86%)	5 (14%)	19 (51%)	18 (49%)
Total	**775 (8.1%)**	**614 (79%)**	**161 (21%)**	**397 (51%)**	**378 (49%)**

* Absentees are defined as household members who were not present in the household during the week preceding the survey.
Source: Household survey data (n=1,083).

marginally outnumber males (Table 2.2). Interestingly, these two "female-biased" districts both have above average household sizes and polygamy rates, and below average numbers of female-headed households. Conversely, "male-biased" Shinile has the smallest average household size, the lowest polygamy rate and below average female-headed households.

Disaggregating the population by age cohort reveals that sex ratios vary significantly across the generations. Comparing our sample survey with the enumerated Census population (Table 2.3) provides some validation of the demographic data collected in our household survey. Except for the youngest cohort (0–4 years old), both sets of data display the same pattern. Males outnumber females among children and teenagers (5–19 years old), and then there is a sharp reversal, with adult females outnumbering males for the next two decades (20–39 years old). Among middle-aged adults (40–59 years old) there is a second reversal, with males again dominant. Among older people (60 years and above), the excess of males over females becomes very large indeed: in the Census, there are two men for every woman over 60 years old. Our survey provides no clear explanation for this pattern, although gender bias could be part of the story (see Chapter 12).

Another explanation for this pattern may be differential mobility between males and females, with young to middle-aged men in particular being more likely to travel for extended periods than women. A total of 671 people were temporarily absent from these 1,100 households at the time of the survey (Table 2.4). Most absentees who remained inside Ethiopia had travelled to other rural areas in Somali Region (62 per cent), but a significant number had gone to urban centres such as Jigjiga or Addis Ababa (22 per cent). Absentees from farming communities were more likely to remain in rural Ethiopia, reflecting the lower mobility of farmers compared to pastoralists. Of those who were outside Ethiopia, most (79 per cent) had travelled to neighbouring Somali countries, while some were in the Middle East (4 per cent) or in the West – Europe or North America (5 per cent). The main destination for absentees from urban Jigjiga households was other urban centres in Ethiopia, especially Addis Ababa, while some were abroad in Western countries. Gashamo is

Table 2.5 **Demographic structures in developing countries and in Somali Region**

Age cohort	Developing countries	Somali Region	Age group	Developing countries	Somali Region
0–4 years	12%	15%	Children	35%	46%
5–9 years	12%	16%	(0–14 years)		
10–14 years	11%	15%	Adults	59%	52%
15–19 years	10%	13%	(15–19 years)		
20–59 years	49%	39%	Older people	7%	3%
60+ years	7%	3%	(60+ years)		
Male/female ratio	51 / 49	51 / 49	Dependency ratio	0.71	0.95

Source: Save the Children 2004: 25; Household survey data.

the only district where more absentees were in neighbouring countries than elsewhere in Ethiopia. Most of these people had been displaced by drought to Somaliland, where they had taken some of the family's livestock to negotiate access to grazing and water. A significant number of absentees were described as having "married" into other households, which might indicate a rise in early marriages as a drought-coping strategy (the parents of the bride receive cash or livestock as a dowry payment).[8] A number of children were also away at boarding school at the time of our survey.

Interestingly, absentee household members are located overwhelmingly (99 per cent) in male-headed households. In 6 of 11 district samples, no absentees at all come from female-headed households. This suggests that women who head households face severely constrained mobility, which is consistent with their domestic reproduction roles.

Somali Region has a very young population, with close to half (46 per cent) the individuals enumerated in our survey aged under 15. This proportion is high even by comparison with other "developing countries", where just over one-third (35 per cent) of the population are under-15s (Save the Children 2004). Conversely, Somali Region has a much smaller proportion of older people (over-60s) than average – just 3 per cent compared to 7 per cent elsewhere. This implies that life expectancy in Somali Region is abnormally low. It also means that the crude dependency ratio (children + older persons per active adult) is close to one (0.95), higher than the "developing countries" average (0.71) (Table 2.5).

Another implication of a very young population is that it raises questions about the nature and sustainability of future livelihood opportunities for the next generation of Somali adults. Without endorsing a simplistic Malthusian discourse (whereby population growth leads inevitably to unsustainable over-exploitation of the fragile natural resource base), concerns are already being raised about the adverse synergies between recurrent (and possibly more frequent and severe) droughts, and environmental degradation associated with overgrazing and charcoal burning. Together with anecdotal evidence (reported in later chapters) that the aspirations of Somali youth might lie increasingly outside pastoralism, we might predict that levels of urbanisation (within Somali Region) and migration (to destinations outside the region) will rise, while the proportion of Ethiopian Somalis who remain engaged in livestock-dependent livelihoods will decline.

2.2 The paradox of wealth plus vulnerability

Pastoralism can be a lucrative livelihood. When national household income and consumption surveys are conducted in Ethiopia, Somali Region often emerges as the wealthiest (or least poor) of all Ethiopia's rural regions, with the highest consumption levels and lowest poverty incidence. In the 1999/2000 Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure (HICE)

8 Although we were told that this was happening, sensitivity about "marrying off daughters" caused this question to be removed from the household survey questionnaire after the pilot test.

Table 2.6 **Poverty headcounts and calorie consumption in Ethiopia, by region**

Rank by intake poverty	Region*	Poverty headcount (1999/2000)			Calorie
		Rural poor (%)	Urban poor (%)	Total poor (%)	(1995/6)
1	**Somali**	**44**	**26**	**38**	**2,109**
2	Oromiya	40	36	40	2,004
3	Amhara	43	31	42	1,957
4	Gambella	55	38	51	1,917
5	SNNPR	52	40	51	1,800
6	Benshangul-Gumuz	56	29	54	1,767
7	Afar	68	27	56	2,055
8	Tigray	62	61	61	1,902
	Total	**45%**	**37%**	**44%**	**1,938**

* Urban-dominated regions and municipalities such as Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa and Harar are excluded from this table.
Source: FDRE (2002).

survey, the poverty headcount in Somali Region was only 38 per cent, lower than the national rate of 44 per cent and considerably less than the poorest region – Tigray, with 61 per cent (Table 2.6). There is significant variation between pastoralist areas within Ethiopia, however. Afar Region, which is also predominantly pastoralist, is the second poorest region, with 61 per cent headcount poverty. The difference probably reflects the higher involvement of Somalis in livestock marketing and cross-border trade; people in Afar are much less engaged with markets.

Although income is a reasonable proxy for well-being, a more direct indicator is food consumption. In the 1995/6 HICE survey, Somali Region again ranked at the top of the list, with an average consumption per person of 2,109 kilocalories per day (Table 2.6). Taking 2,100 kilocalories per person per day as a cut-off level for food security, this suggests that Somali Region was the only food-secure part of rural Ethiopia in 1996. Interestingly, Afar Region, though second poorest in terms of household income, was second most food-secure in terms of food consumption, only 50 kilocalories behind Somali Region. These statistics do not mean that the average Somali household is wealthy in international terms, but they do imply that the average Somali pastoralist is better off than the average crop farmer in highland Ethiopia.

Moving to food security outcome indicators, the picture changes somewhat. Amhara Region, which was mid-range in terms of both poverty and food consumption, has by far the worst record in a ranking of regions by proportion of stunted children (65 per cent) (Table 2.7). Somali Region is no longer first, but third, in this ranking (with 48 per cent stunting), behind Gambella and Afar which both have higher poverty headcounts. Stunting (the proportion of children under five whose height-for-age falls below the average for a reference population) is an anthropometric indicator of chronic or long-term food deficits. It is difficult to reconcile a figure of 48 per cent stunted children in a population whose average food consumption exceeds 2,100 kilocalories per day, but it could suggest either unbalanced diets (too little dietary diversity) or distortions (e.g. gender or age bias) in the intra-household allocation of food.

Child wasting (the proportion of children under five whose weight-for-age falls below the average for a reference population) is an indicator of acute or short-term food insecurity. In the year 2000, levels of wasting were highest in Gambella, followed by Afar and Somali – the two pastoralist regions. So Somali had the third worst levels of wasting in the country, alongside Tigray, despite poverty in Tigray being 23 percentage points higher than Somali. How can this paradox be explained? Why is Somali Region apparently so wealthy, and at the same time so vulnerable?

Table 2.7 **Anthropometric indicators in Ethiopia, by region**

Rank by stunting	Region	Stunting 1999/2000 (%)	Rank by wasting	Region	Wasting 1999/2000 (%)
1	Gambella	40	1	Oromiya	8.8
2	Afar	42	2	SNNPR	9.1
3	**Somali**	**48**	3	Amhara	10.9
4	Benshangul-Gumuz	51	4	Benshangul-Gumuz	11.4
5	Oromiya	54	5	Tigray	11.7
6	SNNPR	57	**6**	**Somali**	**11.7**
7	Tigray	59	7	Afar	11.8
8	Amhara	65	8	Gambella	13.0
	Total	**57**		**Total**	**9.6**

Source: FDRE (2002).

This study is a search for an explanation of this paradox of wealth plus vulnerability among Ethiopian Somalis. The next section of this report explores the complex and diverse livelihood activities and strategies that the people of Somali Region have evolved to make their living in a harsh and difficult environment. However, as will be seen in later chapters, the risks they face are not just environmental – though it is true that there have been several droughts in the past few years, with 2000 and 2004 being particularly severe. Survival in a marginal environment is made more difficult by a variety of "political risks", which include conflict between and within clans over scarce natural resources, government policies that obstruct rather than facilitate trade, weak and unstable governance in the region, unpredictable shifts in the external policy environment (e.g. the ban by Saudi Arabia on livestock imports from the Horn of Africa), compounded by the inadequate provision of essential services (notably education and health), erratic delivery of social safety nets (mainly food aid), and a decline in traditional mechanisms of intra-community support. Given this extremely uncertain and insecure context, the apparent contradiction between different indicators of wealth and well-being in Somali Region becomes easier to understand.

Section 2 Livelihoods

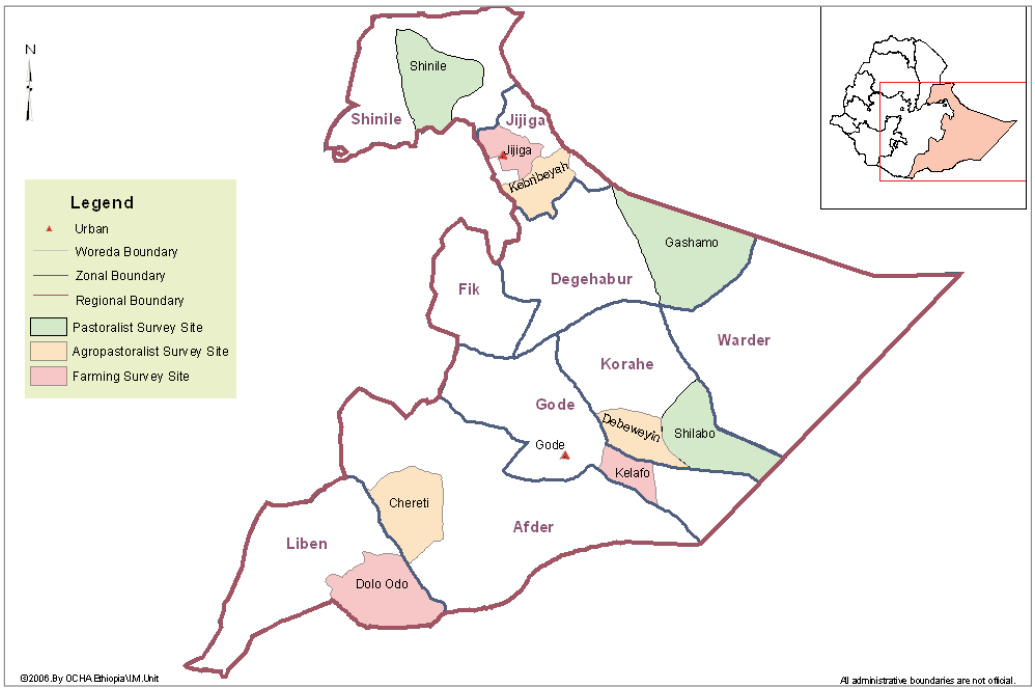
This section has five chapters. Chapter 3 presents livelihood profiles for each of the 11 districts of Somali Region where the household survey was conducted. The next two chapters examine the dominant livelihood systems in this region – pastoralism (including livestock marketing) and crop farming (including agro-pastoralism). Another significant livelihood system is internally displaced persons living in camps like Hartisheik, and IDPs are discussed in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 analyses levels of income and inequality among the 1,100 households surveyed.

3 District livelihood profiles

Contradicting the romantic vision of pastoralism as nomads leading a solitary and self-sufficient existence, wandering through the desert and living off the meat, milk and blood of their camels, livelihoods in Somali Region are extremely diversified. Most households engage in a number of income-generating activities, and most are active participants in markets, especially for tradeable commodities. The livestock off-take system generates regular income, keeps capital flowing through the economy, and allows households to reconstitute their asset base after shocks. On the other hand, most livelihood activities are dependent on the natural resource base, and are therefore vulnerable to covariate shocks such as a drought, which undermines crop farming, livestock production, agricultural labour and herding opportunities simultaneously. Other livelihood activities that are not derived directly from the natural resource base depend on incomes of people who are natural resource dependent, and these livelihoods are vulnerable to 'derived destitution' (Sen 1981). Examples include service providers to pastoralists – barbers and hairdressers, musicians and poets, as well as traders.

A crucial feature of the Somali Region economy, easily overlooked by analyses that focus on pastoralism in isolation, is the interconnected nature of different livelihood activities. Capital flows around this system because pastoralists sell animals to traders and buy food produced by farmers and agro-pastoralists; relatives with jobs in urban centres invest in the rural economy; other relatives living abroad remit cash back to the region. This dynamic and complex set of

Figure 3.1 **Somali Region, with survey sites highlighted**



economic relationships is a source of strength but also a source of vulnerability, as any threat to one set of actors in the system can undermine the livelihoods of many others.

This chapter presents brief overviews of the livelihood system in each of the 11 sub-samples of the household survey. As explained in Chapter 1, the rural survey was stratified by food economy zone to ensure adequate representation of all major livelihood strategies in Somali Region, with fieldwork being conducted in three districts dominated by pastoralists (Gashamo, Shinile and Shilabo), three districts dominated by agro-pastoralists (Kebribayah, Doboweyn and Cherati), and three districts dominated by crop farmers (Kelafo, Dolo Odo and rural Jigjiga). In addition, two urban centres were included in the household survey (Jigjiga town and Gode town). Figure 3.1 shows the dispersal of these 11 sites throughout Somali Region, highlighting the districts and towns surveyed.

3.1 Pastoralist districts

Three districts in our survey are predominantly pastoralist: Gashamo, Shinile and Shilabo.

3.1.1 Gashamo District

Gashamo District, in Degahbur Zone, falls within the Lowland (*Hawd*) Pastoral Food Economy Zone, and has been characterised as 'camel, shoats, and *Berkad* [water reservoirs] dependent' (SC-UK, DPPB and partners 2001a: 1). The *Hawd* is largely arid and there are no rivers or other permanent water sources in Gashamo. Livelihoods in Gashamo District are almost exclusively pastoralist, being dominated by livestock, and are very undiversified (in our survey, only 1.3 activities were recorded per household). Almost every household owns some sheep and goats, while over half of the households surveyed own camels – although this figure is lower than usual because of the recent droughts. Camels are especially important, both as a store of wealth and as a livelihood resource, because camels are well adapted to the *Hawd's* harsh and drought-prone environment. Very few cattle and donkeys were recorded in our survey. Some cattle were kept in the grassland plains around Gashamo town, but almost all these animals died in the drought of 2004.

After livestock rearing, the next four most common livelihood activities are all livestock related – trading livestock or livestock products, selling dairy products (milk, cheese, *ghee* – clarified butter used in cooking) or hides and skins from owned animals. There are some traders who trade foodstuffs, clothes and shoes, but no formal employment and almost no service providers, other than a few restaurant workers. But these are minor activities compared to the livestock-related occupations. Most business in Gashamo is conducted in Somalia Shillings, and most purchased food commodities (rice, wheat flour, sugar, etc.) are imported from Somaliland.

Given this reliance on livestock for household income and food (meat and milk),[9] it follows that the main sources of livelihood risk are those that threaten livestock production or marketing. In recent years, the two major livelihood shocks have been drought and livestock export bans. First, in September 2000, the Gulf states imposed an embargo on livestock imported from Somali Region, which caused a massive loss of earnings for households from Gashamo that depend on livestock exports through the Somaliland port of Berbera to Saudi Arabia for most of their cash income. Second, although Gashamo was relatively unaffected by the drought of 1999/2000 (which had its epicentre further south), poor *Gu'* rains (April–June long rains) in 2001 were followed by a very serious *Gu'* rain failure in 2004, which did affect Gashamo particularly severely, causing widespread livestock mortality and the destitution of many pastoralist households.[10]

9 An assessment in 2001 concluded that milk consumption meets as much as 50 per cent of annual food needs in Gashamo households (Save the Children UK *et al.* 2001a: 2).

10 The humanitarian response to this drought was slow, and in fact a scoping visit to Gashamo for this research project by the Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI) team in July 2004 contributed to alerting the government and donors to the seriousness of the situation.

Paradoxically, given the Ethiopian government's ambition to sedentarise pastoralists, vulnerability to drought in Gashamo has been exacerbated by a proliferation of semi-urban settlements in recent years. Large villages with permanent buildings are now found every 10–15 kilometres, especially along the main trading route to Burao and Berbera. These settlements are financed mainly from remittances sent to families in Gashamo by relatives living abroad. The settled pastoralists of Gashamo keep some livestock near their houses and some out in the bush. During the drought of 2004, it was the immobility of this semi-sedentary lifestyle that caused cattle, shoats (sheep and goats) and even camels to die in large numbers. Many of these villages were partly or wholly abandoned by late 2004, as people left to escape the drought.

Gashamo is a relatively stable district, being sparsely populated and dominated by two major Isaq sub-clans, the Habr Yoonis of the Habr Gerhajis, and the Habr Je'lo. The Isaq also dominate the Republic of Somaliland, and cross-border relationships are good. Most tensions within the region concern disputed access to water (e.g. *berkad*). However, relations between the Isaq and Ogadenis in neighbouring districts are tense, and inter-clan conflicts occur occasionally.

3.1.2 Shinile District

Shinile is uniquely located in the extreme north of Somali Region, wedged between Dire Dawa to the west, Afar Region to the north and Djibouti to the east. Shinile is the poorest of our pastoralist districts and one of the poorest parts of Somali Region. The reasons for this are not immediately apparent. All households in our sample own livestock – sheep and goats are most common (found in over 90 per cent of households surveyed), followed by donkeys and cattle (over 50 per cent of households) – and rearing livestock is the dominant livelihood activity. Selling animals and animal by-products is the main source of income for the majority of households. This is a sparsely populated area, with few territorial disputes or conflicts over natural resources.

The people of Shinile belong to sub-clans of the Issa clan, which inhabits the territory stretching from Dire Dawa to the Republic of Djibouti, where the Issa dominate. The Issa are united under their constitutional order, the famous *Heer Issa*, which promotes peace and stability throughout Issa territory. However, the Issa have difficult relations with the Afar, their northern neighbours. Conflict over the poorly defined regional border has led to many deaths on both sides, and villages that are close to the border and along the tarmac road to Djibouti are regularly attacked. Some consider the long-running dispute between the Issa and Afar to be over access to the Awash river; others consider it a struggle to control the contraband trading route from the eastern highlands of Ethiopia and Dire Dawa to Djibouti.

Most of Shinile's external linkages are with Djibouti rather than Somalia (or highland Ethiopia), but Djibouti itself is poor. There is a good and regular public transport system linking Djibouti to Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, via Ayshia town in Shinile, because Ethiopia imports most of its oil (and many contraband commodities) through the port of Djibouti. Labour migration is one of the main coping strategies in response to drought and limited local livelihood options, but employment opportunities in Djibouti and Dire Dawa are limited to casual labour and informal services (such as portering or running a tea-stall). Since these activities are highly competitive and poorly remunerated, migration does not generate significant flows of income and remittances back into Shinile District.

The people of Shinile have relatively little contact with other parts of Somali Region. This restricts their mobility and magnifies the effects of droughts, as they have few places to move to with their animals to find water and pasture. The local climate is harsh, with droughts being frequent and severe. Importantly, the rainfall pattern in Shinile is different from other parts of Somali Region. The main rains fall in the middle of the year, and are called '*Karan*'. These are equivalent to the long rains – called '*Kremt*' – in the neighbouring Ethiopian highlands. Reliance on one major rainy season, and the long period in between rains, makes Shinile very susceptible to drought. Most of the last dozen years are described as drought years by the local people.

In fact, there is a widespread perception that rain failures have become more regular, or even "continuous", during the last decade. These droughts are blamed for increasing

poverty, causing herds and flocks to shrink in size, and undermining the traditional restocking mechanism, known locally as '*jiisin*'. As a result of the increasing uncertainty associated with pastoralism, some families with access to cultivable land are now diversifying into settled agriculture. In our survey, 11 per cent of households are cultivating cereal crops. A related emerging trend is the increasing involvement of women in providing for their family's food and other basic needs, by engaging in petty trading or running tea-stalls.

Another recent phenomenon is a dramatic rise in the numbers of people collecting firewood and burning or selling charcoal to supplement the household's income from livestock rearing. In our sample, two-thirds of households (67 per cent) are selling charcoal and over half (57 per cent) are selling firewood. These activities are traditionally pursued by the poor and by women, but are now being practised by most households, and even by many men. This increase might be a temporary response to livelihood stress, as firewood and charcoal selling are commonly adopted as a drought coping strategy, only to be abandoned again when the rains return and livestock herds regenerate. Nonetheless, the combination of rearing livestock and selling charcoal or firewood is at present the dominant livelihood strategy in Shinile District.

3.1.3 Shilabo District

Shilabo District is located at the heart of the Ogaden, an area that can be described as very hot and dry, with lots of camels. The Ogadenis are numerically the largest Somali clan in Ethiopia, and are very active in local politics, holding more than half the seats in the regional parliament. Only one quarter of bureau heads in the regional administration are Ogadeni, however, due to pressures to allocate these posts to different clans. Ogadenis also run many of the biggest businesses in Gode and Jigjiga town.

Shilabo town is an important centre for the district, as it is well supplied with shops, markets and public services. There is a telephone facility, which people use to keep in contact with relatives abroad. The government has recently installed a generator in Shilabo town, which provides 12 hours of electricity each day. Shilabo town is also a transport hub for travel to other places within Somali Region, such as Kelafo and Gode town, and to Bosaso in Puntland, north-eastern Somalia.

Shilabo is an unstable area. This is a border area that was badly affected by the Ethiopia–Somalia war in the late 1970s, when Shilabo town was burnt down once and relocated twice. Nowadays, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) is very active, and there are frequent skirmishes between the ONLF and government forces. There are also conflicts between sub-clans, usually over livestock migration routes and access to wells, which can result in fatalities as the population is heavily armed. The two major clans are the Ogaden Makahil, and the Ogaden Bah Geri, which are usually on good terms. There is however ongoing friction between two minor clans, the Hawiye Habr Gedir and the Marehan. An additional complication has been created by the extensive natural gas deposits that are known to exist in the district, ownership and control of which are contested.[11]

Partly because of its long history of conflict and displacement, there is a sizeable Ogadeni diaspora across the world, which remits a large but unquantifiable volume of income to Shilabo and neighbouring districts. Nonetheless, livelihoods in Shilabo are undiversified, with just under two activities per household recorded in our survey, but lucrative. Livestock rearing dominates, especially camels (68 per cent of households, the highest of any district surveyed), sheep and goats. Sales of animals and dairy products generate most of the household income. No households reported engaging in crop farming. Six individuals hold a salaried job. There is limited engagement in craftwork or service provision, except for five Koranic teachers and one shoe-repairer. One household in six has a member who either runs a tea-shop or sells coffee and cake by the roadside. One man interviewed works as a night watchman, guarding the local food aid store. His employers pay him in kind, by giving him 2.5 quintals of wheat and 2 gallons of cooking oil wherever there is a food distribution.

11 More details about the Calub natural gas deposits in Shinile District are provided in Chapter 11.

Ogadenis define themselves as camel herders ('We are good with camels'). They also keep sheep and goats (shoats) and, to a lesser extent, cattle. To search for pasture, they move with their livestock within the extensive Ogaden territories, both inside Somali Region (to Kebribayah and other Ogadeni districts) and across the border into Somalia. Mobility is facilitated by the fact that 'we are all from the same family', and strong reciprocal arrangements have been practised for generations. Migration does occasionally lead to conflicts, especially at times of livelihood stress, but we were informed that this is rare as allowing unrestricted reciprocal access to natural resources is a strict norm within the clan. There are many deep and shallow wells in Shilabo, which are used during the hot, dry season of *Jilaal* (from January to March). At this time of year many herders from neighbouring districts come to Shilabo to water their animals from these wells.

Importantly, Shilabo's wealth derives not only from pastoralism but also from trading, both "official" and "contraband", which is facilitated by its proximity to the border with Somalia and the port of Bosaso, allowing direct access to the lucrative import and export markets of the Gulf states. Several households interviewed (25 per cent) are engaged in exporting livestock and importing clothes, shoes, food (cereals, sugar, coffee) and "white goods" (electrical appliances, a major component of the contraband trade). This lucrative trade is made possible because of the close relationships and extensive networks that exist between Ogadenis in Somali Region and Ogadenis across the border in Somalia, as well as with coastal clans like the Hawiye and Herti.

3.2 Agro-pastoralist districts

Three districts in our survey are predominantly agro-pastoralist: Kebribayah in northern Somali Region, Doboweyn in the centre of the region, and Cherati in the south.

3.2.1 Kebribayah District

Kebribayah is located close to the regional capital of Jigjiga, and it is an agro-pastoral district. Almost all households keep animals and most are also farming. By definition, agro-pastoralism is a more diversified livelihood system than pure pastoralism, and the average household pursues three livelihood activities – rearing livestock (especially cattle, sheep and goats, but also camels, especially in the drier eastern and southern parts of the district), crop farming, as well as a minor income-earning activity like charcoal burning, or collecting firewood or construction materials for sale. Apart from growing cereals, some farmers also cultivate vegetables, *khat*, or root crops. Growing *khat* for sale is a new activity, and is seen as more reliable than rearing livestock. Kebribayah cannot compete with Hararghe in neighbouring Oromiya Region, which has a more conducive climate and is the centre of *khat* production in Ethiopia, in terms of both quantity and quality. Instead, farmers in Kebribayah cultivate a lower quality *khat* that is less labour-intensive and reaches a lucrative market among lower income earners.

Only one person in 100 households surveyed holds a salaried job, and there are no service providers, no craft workers and very few traders – just two trading *khat* and one livestock trader – in our sample. However, Kebribayah is located on the main trading route into Somaliland from Jigjiga and the Harar highlands, and trading is a significant activity, both for contraband goods (which has boomed in recent years, despite government efforts to suppress it) and for "official" cross-border trade.

Kebribayah is a multi-clan district and is characterised by intense competition between clans over access to resources and political representation. These disputes are generally settled through negotiation rather than open conflict, but relations between neighbouring groups are often tense. Because these settled pastoralists are both farming and keeping livestock, competition occurs both for farmland (particularly valley-bottom farmland) and for access to pasture and water. There are two seasonal rivers as well as pans and dams. People live in stable and relatively large settlements and farm family plots, while the surrounding rangeland is divided into family holdings. During dry seasons and droughts, herds and flocks are sometimes moved in search of pasture and water elsewhere, but long-distance mobility is uncommon.

Kebribayah is also home to thousands of long-term refugees and IDPs, most of whom live in two camps at Hartisheik. Originally, these camps were set up for refugees from the civil war in Somalia, but a later wave of refugees came to Hartisheik after being deported from Djibouti. More recently, pastoralists who lost their livestock during the droughts of 1999 and 2004 have come to Hartisheik in the hope of receiving food aid. However, government and donor support to the Hartisheik IDP camps has become increasingly erratic and sporadic, and child malnutrition and mortality rates reached critical levels in early 2005 (see Chapter 6). The government suspects that many camp residents are "economic migrants" from Somali or Oromiya Region – rather than genuine refugees or IDPs – who are using the camp as a base for engaging in contraband trading. Many people believe that the government is trying to close down the camps in response to this perception, by withholding food aid and other essential supplies.

3.2.2 Doboweyn District

Doboweyn is located in Korahe Zone in central Somali Region, between the pastoralist district of Shilabo and the riverine farmers of Kelafo. Most residents live in semi-permanent settlements, having no need to move because access to water is more reliable than in many other parts of the region. Doboweyn has a seasonal river and a large number of wells, so water scarcity is rarely a problem, though the water from many of these wells is salty and unfit for human consumption. Access to wells is free and open to pastoralists from other districts, who often bring their animals through Doboweyn in the dry season.

Almost all households in our Doboweyn sample rear animals – more households own donkeys (70 per cent) in Doboweyn than in any other district surveyed, and the herds or flocks of cattle, sheep, goats and camels recorded are among the highest in the region. Almost half these households are also cultivating cereal crops (though no pulses, vegetables or fruits are grown), mainly in the valleys on either side of the river. In good years, farmers produce surpluses, which they sell in local markets, as Doboweyn is not situated on any major trade route. Perhaps because trade does not feature strongly in local livelihoods, the people of Doboweyn are among the poorest in our sample in terms of cash incomes (along with the two other agro-pastoral districts of Cherati and Kebribayah). They are relatively wealthy in terms of livestock ownership, but do not engage heavily in livestock marketing.

Apart from selling dairy products (milk, butter, *ghee*) derived from their livestock, no other livelihood activity is pursued by more than one in ten households surveyed. A few people sell firewood, construction materials (grass, wooden poles), or tea and cake in their villages. The only waged employment reported was a single daily labourer. There are no craft workers and hardly any service providers: just one Koranic teacher and one midwife.

Two Ogadeni clans dominate Doboweyn District: the majority Bah Geri and the minority Abdwak. Relations between the two clans, who are heavily armed, are always tense and occasionally violent. One recent trigger for a major conflict was some land that is suitable for farming and was claimed by both clans (see Chapter 10 for details). Even within each clan, skirmishes occur frequently between neighbours over access to farmland, irrigation rights and borders between family plots, often leading to loss of life. One explanation for this apparently disproportionate response to contested property rights may be that these people became sedentarised relatively recently.

> A time when common access to all the rangeland was open to all clan members is still very much in the collective memory. Rapidly changing circumstances have led to the settling down of many clan members, who try to pursue a mixed agricultural livelihood. Though individual circumstances of particular incidents differ, this demand to exclusively hold down choice land for farming is generally challenged, and defended by armed confrontations.[12]

12 Abdi Umar, *pers. comm.*

3.2.3 Cherati District

Cherati is located in Afder Zone, between Gode, the largest town in central Somali Region, and Liban Zone in the extreme south of the region. Cherati has the largest market in Afder, well placed at the crossing point of two important trade routes: the north–south route that follows the seasonal river Web from its source in the Bale mountains to the Somalia border, and the new east–west road linking Gode to Filtu in Afder. Cherati District straddles the River Web, which provides enough water and vegetation to support agro-pastoralism on both riverbanks. Beyond this strip of vegetation, transhumant pastoralism is the main livelihood system.

The large majority of households interviewed in Cherati District (over 80 per cent) are agro-pastoralists who live in settlements along the river, where they are farming and rearing animals. More than two-thirds of households own goats, sheep and donkeys, about half own cattle and one-third own camels. Farming is dominated by cereal crops, especially sorghum and maize. The next most common income-earning activity is basket- or mat-making (one household in five), with no other activity being reported by more than one household in ten. Nobody in these households is employed in the formal sector, no one is trading, but there are some informal service providers – eight Koranic teachers, four circumcisers, one traditional healer and one traditional birth attendant (TBA). Apart from selling construction materials, few individuals earn income from charcoal burning or gathering natural products such as firewood, precious stones, wild fruits, incense or gum.

In terms of cash income – though not livestock ownership – Cherati is the poorest district in our sample. Like most rural districts in Somali Region, it is inadequately provided with basic services. Only one clinic (operated by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Belgium) delivers health care to an estimated population of 81,000. Water-borne diseases are common, since the population depends entirely on surface water – the River Web, which is stagnant for much of the year, ponds and shallow wells.

3.3 Farming districts

Three districts in our household survey are dominated by crop farmers: Kelafo and Dolo Odo, where riverine agriculture is practised, and the Jigjiga plains, where agriculture is rainfed.

3.3.1 Kelafo District

Kelafo District is home to the so-called "*Jerer*", or Somali Bantus, who came to Somali Region many decades ago and settled along the banks of the Shabelle river. The *Jerer* have always been sedentary farmers. Almost all households surveyed cultivate cereals (maize, sorghum), as well as vegetables (onions, tomatoes, spinach), pulses and oil crops (beans, sesame), and fruits (papaya, bananas). Although farming is primarily for consumption and only secondarily for sale, in recent years a new marketing opportunity has opened up for farmers who cultivate onions for export to Somalia. Somali traders come to Kelafo to buy onions to sell across the border, in Belet Weyne and Mogadishu. 'Kelafo town is a good market for our animals while Belet Weyne is good for onions and other business.' Since onions are a high-value crop, many farmers are neglecting subsistence crops to take advantage of this opportunity. Wealthy Somali businessmen are also renting land and recruiting sharecroppers, as well as investing in irrigation machinery, to cultivate onions for the export market.

Lack of land is a major problem facing farmers along the Shabelle river in Kelafo District. There is no vacant land for farming and all land is allocated to individuals. The only way to access land is through inheritance or purchase, but as population grows so individual land ownership is falling, as inherited land is sub-divided among family members. Traditional land-sharing institutions are also said to be declining, because land scarcity reduces the availability of spare land to share with others. There are also clashes over access to land between farmers and rising numbers of pastoralists who have lost their livestock and are trying to switch to farming or agro-pastoralism.

Despite the dominance of crop farming, livelihoods in our Kelafo sample are more diversified than in any other district, with more than four activities recorded per household. Almost half of these households rear animals. Cattle are popular, as oxen are used in farming, and many families have small flocks of sheep and goats. Donkeys are also important, as donkey-carts are used to transport water and farm produce to the market – but donkeys are expensive and beyond most people's reach. Petty income is also derived from making charcoal or selling firewood. There are a few farm workers and daily labourers, but no member of these households has a salaried job, and there are very few traders. One household in ten engages in craftwork, such as basket-making, mat-making or making farm tools. There are various informal service providers, including traditional healers, circumcisers, Koranic teachers and TBAs. Many of these activities are only possible because these are densely settled communities so that neighbours can provide services, labour and craftwork to each other.

There is some resentment and hostility between the Bantu and Somali peoples in Kelafo and neighbouring Mustahil District. Even the word "*Jerer*" ("hard hair"), is a derogatory term for Bantu people used by Somalis – who are "*Jilee*" ("soft hair"). According to one Bantu sharecropper: 'Our area is marginalised by the neighbouring Ogaden clans who patronise and discriminate against us. They do not consider us as Somalis, and treat us as slaves.' Sharecroppers are especially resentful of the treatment they receive from Somali landowners. In the early 1990s and early 2000s, there were outbreaks of armed violence between the *Jilee* pastoralists and *Jerer* farmers. Farmers' houses were burned down and their fields were grazed by pastoralist flocks and herds.

At the community level, neighbouring Somali clans were accused of undermining economic development in Kelafo. A specific complaint relates to the construction of a dam upstream from Kelafo, as part of the government-sponsored West Gode irrigation scheme, to divert water from the Shabelle river to farms near Gode town. One farmer explained: 'If our land gets water, then we can plant more. We started encountering this water problem about eight years ago, when the Ogadenis "blocked" the river.' The adverse consequence of the dam at Gode is that the Shabelle no longer floods the farmland along its banks, which used to improve soil fertility. Due to lack of floodwater, land scarcity is intensifying, as farming is concentrated closer to the riverbank. More generally, the people of Kelafo argue that their district has been marginalised by the regional administration because it is a Bantu area. As evidence they point to the poor road network, and the fact that although the area is densely settled, almost no basic services are provided in these communities.

3.3.2 Dolo Odo District

Dolo Odo is a district in Liban Zone, and is the most southerly of our research sites. Four types of settlement pattern are found in this complex corner of Somali Region. Transhumant pastoralists move with their camels and shoats in the arid northern interior of the district. Semi-sedentarised agro-pastoralists live near the river valleys, where their dairy herds of cattle feed on by-products from their farms. Along the riverbanks are stable, long-term settled farming communities. Finally, Dolo Odo town is a large and busy market centre near the border between Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, at the confluence of the Web, Dawa and Ganale rivers. The urban residents of Dolo Odo are traders and business-people, workers in restaurants and hotels, or truck-drivers.

Fieldwork was conducted among the farming households who live along the Dawa and Ganale rivers. Like the communities surveyed in Kelafo District, the local people are ethnically Bantu – from the Gabaweyn tribe – not Somali (though they are Somali-speaking). Because farming in Dolo Odo takes place along the river, it is more diversified than in rain-fed farming areas (a characteristic it shares with farming along the Shabelle river in Kelafo District). Most households cultivate cereals (maize, sorghum), but many also grow pulses (beans), oil crops (sesame or sunflower), vegetables (onions, tomatoes, pumpkins), and fruit (bananas, watermelon).

Most of these farmers keep some animals, including sheep and goats, bullocks for ploughing and donkeys for transport. Donkey owners charge high prices for transporting people and

produce to and from markets, but donkeys are expensive so only a few people own them. Crop marketing is problematic. Unlike Kelafo District, there is no commercial onion farming in Dolo Odo; however, producing fruit for the market is a growth sector. Perhaps because of its location – close to the unstable Gedo region of Somalia – few traders come to rural Dolo Odo. Also, although Dolo Odo town is a bustling hub for trade routes into Kenya and Somalia, with regular trucks and public transport across the border, roads within rural parts of the district are bad or non-existent. As a consequence, households in our Dolo Odo survey are considerably poorer than those in Kelafo. Despite being located fairly close to the district capital and the large town of Mandera in northern Kenya, the riverine farmers have weak rural–urban linkages, partly because these urban centres are dominated by Somalis.

Persistently low rainfall since the 1990s has affected both crops and livestock production in Dolo Odo. The river provides some water for both farming and animals, but since there are no irrigation facilities crop failures do occur. When the rains are good, adequate pasture is available for the livestock, but in bad years animals have to be moved long distances – to Oromiya Region or into Somalia and northern Kenya – in search of grazing and water. Cattle and sheep have been worst affected by recent droughts, while camels and goats offer more resistance. However, camel herds have been afflicted by diseases (known locally as *Goudaan*, *Mattaq* and *Shibnir*), and there are no veterinary services in the district.

Formal employment is almost non-existent in these communities. There are no traders and very few service providers – just one water-carrier and two healers in 100 households interviewed. An important secondary livelihood activity is making mats and baskets for sale, using grasses and reeds collected from the riverbank. One-third of households in our Dolo Odo survey engage in basket- or mat-making, especially during the dry season, as the grass must be left in the sun to dry for several days. These reeds and grasses are also used as roofing materials, so along with firewood and fodder they are gathered – mainly by women and children – for both domestic use and sale.

Conflict within the riverine farming communities of Dolo Odo is almost unknown. The ethnic Bantu are already marginalised within Somali Region; they are under-represented in regional political institutions, and they do not engage in clan politics. Having settled along the river many decades ago, households generally own their own land, acquired through inheritance, so rights to land are well established and are not contested. However, some former (Somali) pastoralists have settled fairly recently and become agro-pastoralists and farmers. Also some entrepreneurs in Dolo Odo are financing a type of sharecropping in the riverine communities, which exacerbates inequality between the ethnic groups and is a potential source of tension and resentment.

3.3.3 Jigjiga rural

Jigjiga Zone is the most heavily settled of Somali Region's nine zones, with almost a quarter of the region's population, 80 per cent of whom are rural. Over 650,000 people are agro-pastoralists or farmers in this zone. Our household survey team interviewed 100 farming households in the plains outside Jigjiga town.

In the absence of permanent or seasonal rivers, people of the Jigjiga plains depend on rain for both domestic water consumption and crop farming. This part of Somali Region receives three rainy seasons rather than two: *Gu'* (April to May), *Hagaa* (June to July) and *Karan* (August to September). The *Karan* rains are unique to the northern zones of Jigjiga and Shinile, and allow the cultivation of long-maturing rain-fed crops, which is not feasible in other parts of the region. Crops cultivated on the Jigjiga plains include cereals (mainly wheat and barley, also maize and oats), pulses (chickpeas, lentils) and oil seeds (flax). Smaller amounts of Irish and sweet potato, peas, onions and garlic are also grown, mainly for sale.

The main harvest occurs towards the end of the year. Farmers consume from their granaries from December until food stocks are exhausted, which varies according to factors such as landholding and rainfall. For the remaining months of the year until the next harvest, these families depend on market purchases of food, which they finance by selling livestock or milk, and searching for daily labour. Poor households are forced into selling

some food staple at harvest to meet their cash needs, and to buy food back later at higher prices, which is a source of livelihood vulnerability. Since these households depend on cropping for much of their food and their cash income, they are extremely vulnerable to drought or erratic rains.

Most farming households keep some cattle: cows are kept for their milk, while oxen are used in ploughing. Having a pair of oxen is a determinant or relative wealth: 'the household who has one ox has breakfast, while those who have two oxen are able to have breakfast and lunch' (SC-UK, DPPB and partners 2001b: 12). Some sheep and goats are also kept by most families, while donkeys are used as pack animals. Livestock are fed on crop residue (stalks, cobs and husks) as well as pasture. Local farmers have access to several large markets for selling farm produce or livestock and buying food, including Jigjiga town, Hartisheik, Chinahsan, Babile and Dire Dawa.

Despite their location close to the regional capital, the people of rural Jigjiga are inadequately provided with basic services. There are very few schools and health clinics, although since the decentralisation process started some primary schools have been constructed. There is no potable water for human consumption in these rural communities, and people depend on unclean surface water (e.g. ponds), which contributes to the high prevalence of preventable illnesses.

3.4 Urban centres

Two surveys were conducted in the largest urban centres of Somali Region: Jigjiga and Gode.

3.4.1 Jigjiga town

As the capital of Somali National Regional State, Jigjiga is a rapidly growing town with a large number of professionals working for the government, private sector and NGOs, in addition to a variety of informal sector activities. Many of the government and NGO workers are strangers to Somali Region, having been posted to Jigjiga from Addis Ababa or abroad. However, many other urban residents have strong linkages with rural communities, having migrated from rural areas themselves, and the nature and strength of rural–urban linkages can be an important determinant of livelihood security or vulnerability.

Urban centres offer a very different set of livelihood opportunities to rural areas. Two striking features of livelihoods in Jigjiga town are the variety of ways that people earn income – many of which are not available to people living in rural areas – and the wide range of returns to each livelihood activity.

Salaried employment tends to offer the highest and most reliable income. In one household, the 25-year-old eldest son is a junior civil servant in the Regional Administration, and earns a salary of 1,200 Birr per month. In another Jigjiga household the 34-year-old household head is also employed as a civil servant, earning 1,058 Birr per month. Interestingly, some of the best-paid jobs in Somali Region are working for NGOs. One 48-year-old man in Jigjiga town works for an international NGO and earns a salary of 3,500 Birr per month. He also gets a transport allowance of 600 Birr per month and a medical allowance of up to 3,000 Birr per month. With salaries offered by NGOs up to three times higher than those paid by the Government of Ethiopia, it is hardly surprising that many of the most talented professionals in Somali Region seek employment outside the public sector. A further deterrent is that government employment in Ethiopia is not as reliable as in civil services elsewhere, which are often seen as providing "job-for-life" sheltered employment. During 2004, for instance, the Regional Government terminated the employment of 900 officials, alleging that their education documents were forged. This was the second incident of mass employment termination by the Somali Regional Administration within the same year.

In the informal sector, incomes are even more irregular, and often unpredictable. One traditional healer in Jigjiga, asked to estimate his monthly income, replied: 'It varies.

Sometimes I can make 450 Birr in a month, but it's not every day that I get income.' Many informal livelihood activities in urban areas are illicit or illegal. It is reported that there has recently been a rise in the number of young women in Jigjiga turning to prostitution to support themselves and their families. Informal activities also tend to provide lower returns. One man who makes his living by begging in Jigjiga market estimated his monthly earnings at 150 Birr. At the other end of the income scale, one prosperous trader in Jigjiga town claimed to earn approximately 30,000 Birr each month from selling gemstones.

Trading can be extremely lucrative, but informal cross-border trade has been declared illegal by the Ethiopian government. Many of the wealthiest people in Jigjiga acquired their wealth through smuggling or selling contraband goods. In the last few years, the government has clamped down heavily on the contraband trade, and there have been several violent confrontations between traders and the state. In one incident, Ethiopian military personnel and Customs officials intercepted a convoy of trucks bringing contraband commodities to Jigjiga market. The smugglers were armed and gunfire was exchanged, with loss of life on both sides. Traders interviewed in Jigjiga complain that the government claims to support a liberalised free market economy but instead imposes restrictions on trade that are preventing many traders from trading, as well as disrupting supplies and causing prices of basic commodities to rise. In this way, even urban residents enjoying the highest incomes in Somali Region are vulnerable to unpredictable shocks – though mainly through the market rather than drought or conflict.

3.4.2 Gode town

Gode is the former capital of Somali Region, and as such it is a large and busy urban settlement with well-developed infrastructure. The town centre has electricity, piped water, a hospital, clinics and pharmacies, primary and secondary schools, and an agricultural college. Flights to and from Jigjiga and Addis Ababa leave daily from Gode airport. The Shabelle river runs past the town, providing water for a large-scale irrigated farming scheme. On the other hand, Gode is also home to thousands of former pastoralists who live in informal settlements on the outskirts of town, having migrated to Gode after losing all their livestock during the drought of 1999/2000.

Almost all livelihood activities recorded in our household survey (n=55/64, or 86 per cent) are practised by the 100 households interviewed in Gode town, but no single activity or cluster of activities is dominant. This partly reflects the greater range of livelihood options available in urban areas, in contrast to rural areas. Farming, however, is not practised by any members of this sample, and only a few households own any animals.

On the other hand, one household in five interviewed has a member with a salaried job – a higher proportion even than the larger town of Jigjiga. Several people are employed as construction workers, carpenters, restaurant workers and housemaids. Four young men are in military service. As is common in towns, the informal sector is an important source of employment and income. There are artisans making baskets and mats, tailors, potters and a woman who makes jewellery. Many families earn income from renting out rooms. Various services are provided in Gode town, including henna decorators (women who paint henna patterns on other women's hands and feet), barbers, hairdressers, tailors, musicians, marriage counsellors and traditional healers. Three individuals admitted to begging for a living – no beggars were found in rural areas.

Many wealthy businessmen and businesswomen live in Gode, running wholesale or retail stores, and trading locally or long distance. A wide range of commodities are traded by members of our surveyed households, including clothes and shoes, livestock and livestock products, food crops and other food stuffs (sugar, flour, etc.), "contraband" (such as electronic goods smuggled from the Middle East) and *khat*. In recent years, the Government of Ethiopia has clamped down on contraband trading (see Chapter 4), which has affected businesspeople in Gode. Nonetheless, average incomes in our Gode sample are significantly higher than incomes in any rural district, and second only to incomes in Jigjiga town.

4 Livestock rearing and marketing

Livelihoods in rural Somali Region are dominated by livestock, which are the main assets owned by the majority of households, are a major source of food consumption, and are traded – both live animals and animal by-products – to generate cash income for pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, traders and a range of livestock marketing agents. This chapter provides an overview of livestock ownership from our household survey and the problems faced by livestock rearers, describes the livestock-marketing system within Somali Region, and highlights the importance and risks of the cross-border trade through Somalia and Kenya into the Gulf states.

4.1 Livestock ownership in Somali Region

With the exception of households interviewed in the two urban centres of Jigjiga and Gode town, most households in our survey own livestock of various kinds. Different kinds of animals are reared in different parts of the region, and different mixes of animals are kept by pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, and farmers. Goats and sheep (shoats) are most common, and are found throughout the region, though they are favoured most by pastoralists and least by farmers. In the pastoralist districts of Gashamo and Shinile, almost all households keep sheep and goats (averaging about 20 head of each), but in the riverine farming communities of Kelafo only one in four households keeps shoats (averaging just four head of each) (Table 4.1 and Table 4.2).

Perhaps the defining image of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa is the camel herder, and camels are indeed found throughout Somali Region, especially in the drier eastern parts of the *Hawd* (Warder Zone) where water and grazing are scarce. In our survey, camels are owned by more than half the households in Gashamo, Shinile, Kebribayah and Shilabo (Table 4.2). Shilabo has the highest proportion of camel owners (two-thirds of households), though it was less severely affected by the drought of 2004 than Gashamo and Kebribayah, when

Table 4.1 **Households owning livestock, by district**

District	Camels (%)	Cattle (%)	Goats (%)	Sheep (%)	Donkeys (%)	Number of households
Pastoralist	**59**	**27**	**83**	**82**	**29**	**301**
Gashamo	55	6	91	82	10	100
Shinile	53	53	94	93	66	100
Shilabo	68	21	65	70	12	101
Agro-pastoral	**43**	**72**	**65**	**65**	**57**	**298**
Kebribayah	57	92	64	64	32	100
Doboweyn	38	65	61	64	70	98
Cherati	34	57	71	68	70	100
Farmer	**4**	**55**	**45**	**43**	**44**	**301**
Kelafo	2	44	28	24	20	101
Dolo Odo	3	42	51	44	54	100
Jigjiga rural	8	79	56	61	60	100
Urban	**1**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**200**
Jigjiga town	2	4	0	0	0	100
Gode	0	2	3	4	2	100
Total	**29 %**	**42 %**	**53 %**	**52 %**	**36 %**	**1,100**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,100).

Table 4.2 **Livestock ownership, by district (all households)**

District	Camels	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Donkeys	TLUs
Pastoralist	**8.2**	**3.9**	**22.0**	**18.4**	**1.3**	**20.4**
Gashamo	5.0	0.3	19.5	19.6	0.0	12.2
Shinile	4.9	7.7	24.5	19.4	2.2	18.4
Shilabo	14.7	3.8	22.0	16.3	1.4	30.5
Agro-pastoral	**5.7**	**11.4**	**12.3**	**11.8**	**1.9**	**20.3**
Kebribayah	4.1	8.6	4.3	6.5	1.2	14.0
Doboweyn	7.7	15.2	16.5	15.4	2.6	27.1
Cherati	5.4	10.6	16.2	13.6	2.1	19.9
Farmer	**0.4**	**8.0**	**7.2**	**6.4**	**1.5**	**8.2**
Kelafo	0.3	7.5	4.0	3.6	0.8	6.8
Dolo Odo	0.7	4.8	9.8	7.2	1.7	6.8
Jigjiga rural	0.3	11.7	8.0	8.6	2.1	11.1
Urban	**0.2**	**0.7**	**0.4**	**0.3**	**0.1**	**0.9**
Jigjiga town	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3
Gode	0.0	0.4	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.5
Average	**3.9**	**6.5**	**11.4**	**10.1**	**1.3**	**13.5**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,100).

many households lost all their animals. Pastoralists in Shilabo also had the largest reported herds of camels at the time of our survey (15 head each, or 22 head excluding households with no camels),[13] followed by the agro-pastoralist district of Doboweyn (eight head each), which borders Shilabo and was also relatively unaffected by the 2004 drought. Almost no farming or urban household owns any camels.

Cattle are favoured by agro-pastoralists, with herds averaging 11 head being owned by almost all households in Kebribayah, two-thirds of households in Doboweyn, and over half the households in Cherati. Similar sized herds of cattle are owned by almost 80 per cent of farmers in the Jigjiga plains, and (in smaller numbers) by just under half the farmers in Kelafo and Dolo Odo. Cattle are less well adapted to pastoralist conditions, so are not widespread in Shilabo or Gashamo – where many cattle died during the 2004 drought – but they are popular in the northern Somali district of Shinile, which has a different rainfall system that provides more water and grazing.

Finally, donkeys are popular throughout rural Somali Region as pack animals, either transporting water and firewood for domestic use, or carrying commodities – charcoal, firewood, farm produce, milk – to market. Since they have limited mobility relative to camels, they tend not to accompany camel caravans on long-distance trading trips, and they are found in relatively few pastoralist households – except for Shinile, which practises a form of pastoralism based on cattle and less migration with animals than in the arid *Hawd*. Donkeys are most common in the agro-pastoralist districts of Doboweyn and Cherati, followed by pastoralist Shinile, and they are also favoured by farmers in the Jigjiga plains and in riverine communities of Dolo Odo. On the other hand, the number of donkeys owned tends to be lower than other types of livestock – usually one donkey or a pair for domestic use, sometimes two or three more for renting out (Table 4.2).

13 Like income, livestock ownership is susceptible to under-reporting in household surveys. Animals that are being reared in other households might not be reported as "owned" by either household, for instance. While efforts were taken to avoid this, it is possible that the numbers recorded here understate actual ownership levels, even if the trends across districts are accurate.

Finally, Table 4.2 shows the average tropical livestock units (TLUs) per household. TLUs are a method for converting different types of livestock into a single index, so that total livestock owned can be compared across different herd and flock compositions.[14] This calculation reveals that livestock ownership is almost equal (at 20 TLUs) in pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households. Pastoralists own more camels (which have the highest TLU value) and shoats, but agro-pastoralists own more cattle and donkeys. The highest average TLU is recorded for Shilabo (at just over 30), followed by Doboweyn (27 TLUs), Cherati (20) and Shinile (18). Farming communities have much lower values (averaging 8 TLUs), while urban households have a negligible amount (0.9 TLU).

Although most households in our rural sample reported that they own some livestock, almost all of them claim that the numbers of animals they own today is fewer than in the past. Table 4.3 records the reasons given by survey respondents to the question: 'If the number of livestock owned by your household has decreased during the last ten years (since 1995), what are the reasons?' As can be seen, 'died in drought' is by far the most common reason, being mentioned by more than 100 per cent of people who currently own camels and cattle, and 98 per cent of owners of shoats. (This means that many people who owned camels and cattle ten years ago have since lost all these animals during the recent droughts, and own none today.) Disease is the second most common reason for declining livestock ownership. Although less visible and dramatic than drought events, livestock diseases emerge from this survey as a major killer of camels, cattle, sheep and goats. This suggests a large and urgent unmet need for veterinary services in Somali Region, especially immunisation of livestock.

After drought and disease, which are largely beyond the control of livestock owners to prevent, the next most common reasons for declining livestock numbers reflect decisions taken for nutritional, socio-cultural, or economic reasons. Livestock off-take is a standard livestock management strategy. Nutritional reasons include selling animals to buy other types of food (mainly cereals) or consuming the animals at home. Socio-cultural reasons include contributing animals as *zakaat*, sacrificing or donating animals for religious or charitable reasons, and making in-kind dowry or compensation payments. Economic reasons include selling animals to meet non-food needs for cash, and lending or renting some animals out to others, which keeps herds and flocks manageable and diversifies risk, as well as strengthening social relationships. These factors all affected camels, cattle and shoats to a significant extent, while donkeys were affected much less.

Finally, a number of misfortunes can reduce herds and flocks, the most prevalent of which is been taken and eaten by wild animals such as hyenas, which was mentioned by over one-third of camel and cattle owners and half of sheep and goat owners. Other misfortunes include animals being lost, stolen, poisoned, raided or killed in conflicts. Each of these affected relatively few households, though the impacts on their livelihoods might well have been devastating, especially where camels and cattle were involved.

Although livestock rearing is the most popular livelihood activity recorded in our survey, being practised by 70 per cent of all households and 86 per cent of rural households interviewed, it is clear that this is a highly risky way of making a living. Herds and flocks fluctuate quite dramatically according to drought episodes or disease outbreaks, and income earned from livestock is unpredictable and irregular, being determined by a range of factors such as market conditions and seasonality, as well as inter-annual variations in rainfall. Asked to estimate his household's monthly income from rearing and selling livestock during 2004, one Gashamo pastoralist replied: 'It depends on the prices and the season we are in.' A second Gashamo pastoralist who lost most of his camels and shoats to the drought reported a 65 per cent decline in income from livestock sales, while a third told how he withdrew from livestock marketing after losing most of his animals.

14 Tropical livestock units are calculated by multiplying animals owned by an index value obtained from the FAO. The technical definition is 'One Tropical Livestock Unit (TLU) is equivalent to an animal of 250 kg liveweight' (FAO 1998). The index TLU values for east Africa are: camels = 1.6; cattle = 0.7; goats and sheep = 0.1; donkeys = 0.4.

Table 4.3 **Reasons for decreasing livestock ownership, 1995–2005**

Reason	Camels	Cattle	Shoats*	Donkeys
Died in drought	363 (114%)	477 (103%)	570 (98%)	67 (17%)
Disease	247 (77%)	265 (57%)	346 (59%)	23 (6%)
Contribution (*zakaat*)	143 (45%)	165 (36%)	262 (45%)	1 (0%)
Sold for food	124 (39%)	213 (46%)	257 (44%)	12 (3%)
Eaten by wild animals	117 (37%)	170 (37%)	287 (49%)	13 (3%)
Consumed at home	103 (32%)	175 (38%)	391 (67%)	5 (1%)
Dowry payment	96 (30%)	116 (25%)	79 (14%)	0 (0%)
Offering (*Allah bari*)	73 (23%)	114 (25%)	329 (56%)	1 (0%)
Charity (*qaadhaan*)	68 (21%)	97 (21%)	211 (36%)	4 (1%)
Compensation payment	62 (19%)	44 (10%)	25 (4%)	0 (0%)
Sold (not for food)	53 (17%)	95 (21%)	117 (20%)	3 (1%)
Lent or rented out	30 (9%)	29 (6%)	51 (9%)	2 (1%)
Lost	24 (8%)	31 (7%)	50 (9%)	4 (1%)
Stolen	16 (5%)	14 (3%)	20 (3%)	2 (1%)
Conflict	8 (3%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
Poisoned	6 (2%)	20 (4%)	26 (4%)	2 (1%)
Raiding	5 (2%)	3 (1%)	2 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total livestock owners	**320 (100%)**	**462 (100%)**	**583 (100%)**	**396 (100%)**

* Responses for sheep and goats were virtually identical, so are merged as 'shoats'.
Source: Household survey data (n=1,083).

> I used to sell animals every six months and I used to get about 1 million Somali Shillings or more each time. Now because of the drought I only have some goats left to sell and last time I earned 350,000 Somali Shillings.
>
> I used to sell about 20 animals every year – camels, cattle, sheep and goats. For the last three years I earned about 20 million Somali Shillings from livestock sales. Now almost all the livestock I owned are dead due to the drought. I have a few animals left, but I am not selling them. I only slaughter a sheep or a goat when we have nothing else to eat.

Pastoralists perceive themselves as having been wealthy in the past, but impoverished by recent livelihood shocks. 'Thirty years ago, we pastoralists were rich. Now we are nearly all poor.'[15] The empirical evidence does not entirely support this bleak assertion. A comparison of household incomes across districts (see Table 7.1 in Chapter 7) reveals that the pastoralist districts of Gashamo and Shilabo are the wealthiest of nine rural districts in our survey, in terms of monthly cash income, and that farmers and pastoralists earned almost equal levels of income during 2005. However, pastoralist Shinile is one of the poorest districts, ahead only of Cherati, one of the three agro-pastoralist districts, which occupy the lowest positions in the income ranking. Agro-pastoralists are by far the poorest communities in Somali Region, suggesting that the income and food generated through farming does not offset the risks of keeping livestock in a drought-prone region, probably because agro-pastoralists are sedentary and therefore less mobile than pastoralists.

On the other hand, these income figures exclude households reporting zero cash income in 2004. When these are included (i.e. calculating average income across all households), Gashamo drops from first to fifth wealthiest district, behind all three farming districts. This highlights the devastating impact of the 2004 drought on household incomes in Gashamo, and confirms that the source of pastoralist wealth is also the source of its vulnerability. Most

15 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

Table 4.4 **Gross daily revenue from livestock sales in four Somali markets, 2005 (Birr)**

Animals	Tog Wachale	Gode	Hartisheik	Jigjiga	Total (Birr)	Average daily number sold
Bulls	606,305	197,863	77,029	14,187	895,384	569
Cows	36,991	9,848	37,730	22,398	106,967	124
Goats	10,468	35,626	36,177	7,540	89,811	496
Sheep	18,844	25,641	44,810	14,894	104,189	550
Camels	10,117	13,444	64,440	22,478	110,479	66
Total	**682,725**	**282,422**	**260,186**	**81,497**	**1,306,830**	**1,805**

Source: Baulch and Umar (2005: 12, 35).

households in Gashamo suffered a dramatic loss of wealth and income during 2004, and many lost all of their primary source of wealth – their animals. One Gashamo pastoralist said: 'We lost all our livestock during the drought. We do not have anything to eat and nothing to live on.' Some families dropped out of pastoralism altogether in 2004, either temporarily or permanently, being unable to sustain a livelihood without animals. The same trend was observed during the 1999/2000 drought in central Somali Region, when many families were forced to abandon livestock rearing for their living, and migrated to IDP camps or informal settlements on the edge of Gode and other towns, in search of food aid or petty income from selling firewood and charcoal to urban residents (IDS 2002).

Finally, livestock ownership is significantly gendered, with men owning almost all large stock (camels and cattle) and women owning mainly small stock (goats and sheep). According to some women: 'In Somali culture, women are not really supposed to own animals'; 'We are pastoralists by name only: it is the men who are the actual pastoralists since they own the animals, not the women.' Other women contradicted these generalisations, arguing that Somali women can and do own animals. 'Women have always been able to own animals when they are unmarried or divorced. If a woman owns animals before marriage, they remain hers after marriage'; 'Things are changing, because younger women are starting to own animals.'[16] Nonetheless, women's perception that Somali men are "married to their animals" explains much of the ambivalence towards pastoralism (discussed later in this report) that many Somali women expressed in discussions during this research.

4.2 Livestock marketing in Somali Region

The Ethiopia Customs Authority reported that a total of 41,966 live animals were officially exported from all of Ethiopia in 2003/4, but an estimate made for this project puts the number of animals exported annually from two markets in Somali Region (Hartisheik and Tog Wachale) at between 133,641 and 272,787 animals – 3.2 to 6.5 times higher than the official national export numbers for one year earlier.[17] This discrepancy partly reflects the high volume of informal cross-border trade out of the region. Nonetheless, pastoralists and traders are unable to sell as many animals as they would like. During three months of daily market monitoring in 2005, more animals were offered than purchased every day, in all four markets monitored (Baulch and Umar 2005: 11). This pattern of persistent excess supply is confirmed by the Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development: in Jigjiga livestock market, the average number of animals offered for sale daily during 2001/2 was 803, while the number sold was 182. In 2003/4, the number of animals offered each day had risen to 1,153, but only 249 were sold.

16 Female focus group participants, rural Gashamo.

17 Baulch and Umar (2005: 8), whose estimate is based on three months of monitoring the four major livestock markets of Jigjiga, Hartisheik, Gode and Tog Wachale, between April and June 2005.

Table 4.5 **Time-line for livestock traders in Somali Region, 1992–2005**

Years	Assessment
1992–93	Good years – unrestricted trade, supply and demand both high and reliable.
1994–95	'*Malable*' ('Honeyed years'): '*Dhirta malab ka kacay*' ('Honey poured out of the bushes'); it rained from the *Gu'* until the *Jilaal*, and money was plentiful.
1996	'*Qeyla Weyn*' ('Big shout out'): there was no water, so everyone was shouting out for external assistance – a very bad year for livestock and people.
1997	'*Biyo Badan*' ('Plentiful waters'): heavy El Niño rains caused flooding in some areas, but had only a minor negative impact on livestock trading.
1998	Rift Valley Fever: livestock died, prices collapsed, Saudi Arabia banned imports from the Horn, exports through Somaliland collapsed – a terrible year for traders.
1999–2000	'*Sima*' ('Equaliser'): severe drought around Gode caused an increase in "distress sales" by pastoralists, benefiting traders who bought up livestock at low prices.
2001	Second outbreak of Rift Valley Fever and another import ban by the Gulf States; Government of Ethiopia authorities started intervening against contraband trade (border closures, confiscation of vehicles, livestock and commodities) – these interferences with trade caused great hardship to pastoralists and traders.
2002–2005	Some Gulf states lifted the livestock import ban but Saudi Arabia upheld it; trade recovered partially as livestock were smuggled into Saudi Arabia through Yemen.
2002	Government of Ethiopia imposed a strict "border closure" policy with Somalia and Somaliland (February) and banned all foreign-registered vehicles, to eradicate contraband trade; this border closure was relaxed later in the year (August).
2003	Good year: sheep production was good and sales were good; the exchange rate between Somali Shillings and the US dollar was also favourable for traders.
2004	'*Tuur ku Qaat*' ('Carry on the back'): severe drought in northern Somali Region caused pack camels to die; many pastoralists lost all their animals; livestock traders were forced to abandon trading; many businesses collapsed.
2005	Government of Ethiopia continued its "war on contraband", impounding vehicles, confiscating livestock and commodities, ransacking markets, and banning use of all foreign currencies inside Ethiopia – traders lost heavily, businesses closed.

Source: Trade and marketing survey data.

Table 4.4 summarises the average daily revenue taken and animals sold in four major livestock markets in Somali Region, during a three-month monitoring period in 2005. The scale of this trade is impressive. Over 1,800 animals are sold every market day, which equates to over 600,000 animals traded every year. Over 1.3 million Birr changes hands daily in these four markets alone, equivalent to over US$140,000, or US$50 million annually.[18] Given the

18 These estimates should be taken as crude approximations only. They are extrapolated from a continuous three-month monitoring period of just four markets, and are not adjusted for seasonality or disruptions to market activity. Total trade volumes and revenues are probably substantially higher than our estimates, but are also likely to display high inter-annual variability.

evidence of over-supply of animals, the potential market is perhaps as much as four times greater than at present.

On the other hand, Somali livestock producers – pastoralists and agro-pastoralists – receive only a proportion of this income. Because supply generally exceeds demand and markets do not clear, producers and traders are price-takers. Also, as explained below, there are large numbers of market intermediaries requiring payments for their services, which erodes the returns to those who actually rear these animals. In a sense, therefore, there is no livestock "marketing" in Somali Region. Rather, livestock owners (and traders) respond reactively to signals of demand from Gulf states and other export markets. Similarly, riverine farmers in Kelafo are responding to a demand for vegetables from Somalia, by producing and selling as many onions as they can. But there are no innovations by producers in livestock or crop marketing, no flexibility in trade routes, no search for new markets. Prices are accepted rather than negotiated, and producers have little power in the market to influence either prices or consumer demand. These characteristics of the marketing system reduce rural household incomes and introduce additional sources of vulnerability to the livelihoods of pastoralists and farmers in Somali Region.

The unpredictable and fluctuating returns to livestock trading in Somali Region are shown in the following time-line, constructed from interviews with traders (Table 4.5), which suggests that there have been equal numbers of good and bad years since the early 1990s. Table 4.5 also highlights the multiple sources of risk that traders have to face, which are discussed later in this chapter.

4.3 The marketing system in Somali Region

This section describes the main commodities that are traded into and out of Somali Region; the main trading routes through and out of the region; and the main actors in the marketing system, including the role of women traders.

4.3.1 Commodities traded in Somali Region

Although most discussions of trade in Somali Region focus on exports of live animals out of the region to neighbouring countries and the Gulf states, trading is vibrant and complex, involving many more commodities than livestock, imports as well as exports, and several distinct trade routes. Our survey of trade and marketing found that the most significant commodity movements can be disaggregated into four clusters.

1 Exports from Somali Region to neighbouring countries:
- ***Livestock (1)*** – especially cattle and sheep, through the Somalia ports of Berbera, Bosaso and Mogadishu to the Middle East.
- ***Livestock (2)*** – mainly goats and cattle, through border towns to markets in Kenya.
- ***Perishable food items*** – animal products (milk, butter, *ghee*), local cereals (millet, sorghum), and vegetables (onions, tomatoes, potatoes), mainly to Somalia.

2 "Exports" from Somali Region to other regions of Ethiopia:
- ***Livestock (3)*** – mainly goats, to export abattoirs based in and around Addis Ababa.

3 Reexports from elsewhere in Ethiopia to neighbouring countries:
- ***Khat*** – grown in the highlands of eastern Haraghe, to the towns and trading centres of northern Somali Region, and to the neighbouring countries of Somalia and Djibouti.
- ***Vegetables*** – from Oromiya through Somali Region to markets in Somalia.

4 Imports into Somali Region through the ports of Somalia and Djibouti:
- ***Non-perishable food items*** – rice, wheat flour, pasta, cooking oil, biscuits, sugar, tea.
- ***Clothes*** – new and used ("second-hand").
- ***Household groceries*** – soap, kerosene, batteries.
- ***Consumer durables*** – torches, lamps, thermos flasks, pots and pans, radios.

By far the most important export from Ethiopia by value is *khat*, though most of the profits from *khat* exports accrue to traders from Haraghe and Somalia. Informal exports of live animals, sold to traders by Somali pastoralists, generate the largest income for Somali Region itself. These animals serve the demand for meat in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, and the trade is highly seasonal, peaking around the annual *Haj*. On the other hand, there is limited movement of livestock from lowland Somali Region to highland Ethiopia, not even to large urban markets like Addis Ababa. The main reason is differences in tastes: Somali meat is valued by consumers in the Gulf states, but not by Ethiopian highlanders, who prefer highland breeds. Traders from Kebribayah told us: 'Since there is no market in "Ethiopia" we send our sheep and goats to Somalia'.

Another large market exists for high-value vegetable crops like onions and tomatoes in Somalia, which at present is being partly met by farmers from Oromiya whose fresh vegetables are trucked across Somali Region to towns inside Somalia, where wholesalers and retailers purchase them for resale in towns like Galkayo and Mogadishu. (Ironically, some of this produce is re-imported into Ethiopian districts such as Bokh from Galkayo, where it is more expensive than just across the border!) Recently, farmers in irrigated and riverine areas of Somali Region, such as Gode and Kelafo, have responded to this market opportunity by cultivating more vegetables for cross-border sale. More generally, these lucrative markets outside Ethiopia offer essential income-earning opportunities for pastoralists, farmers and traders from Somali Region, since local markets are much smaller, and local purchasing power is lower. It follows that any restrictions on cross-border trade impose serious constraints on livelihoods in Somali Region.

While most exports from Somali Region are live animals and perishable produce, most imports are non-perishable food items and durable goods (clothes, utensils, electronic goods). New and second-hand clothes are sold on open-air stalls and in permanent markets like "Taiwan" – so called because many cheap clothes on sale are made in China – in Jigjiga town and Harar. Almost all of these imports are informal and considered as "contraband" by the Government of Ethiopia. As discussed below, the government's hostility to cross-border trade, both into and out of Somali Region, is a major source of livelihood vulnerability.

4.3.2 Trade routes from Somali Region

There are several distinct and long-established trade routes through and beyond Somali Region that connect landlocked Ethiopia with the outside world through several ports in Djibouti, Somalia (including Somaliland and Puntland)[19] and Kenya. The orientation of these trade routes is related to "marketsheds" that are defined by clan territorial boundaries, geographical features like access to water points and grazing along the route, and distances between purchasing centres and export markets or ports. Economic considerations include the price and availability of public or private transport, various transactions costs incurred in moving livestock and commodities across long distances, and the prices offered by traders. An additional factor that can modify these trade routes is conflict or *aabsi* – fear and tension caused by insecurity and "latent conflict" between groups. The corollary of this observation is that certain clans control and dominate each route, and relations between clans along the route, or between members of the same clan on either side of the national border, determine how smoothly traffic flows and how secure the route is.

There are three trade corridors out of northern Somali Region, known as the Issa, Berbera and Bosaso corridors. A fourth trade route, the riverine trading area, links central Somali Region with Somalia and northern Kenya, and southern Somali Region is connected to northern Kenya through the "Zone Liban".

19 Somalia has effectively been "a state without a government" since the civil war ended with Siyad Barre's overthrow in 1989. The "Republic of Somaliland" is an unrecognised self-proclaimed state in northern Somalia that declared its independence in May 1991. Its capital is Hargeisa and the main port is Berbera. Puntland, in north-eastern Somalia, declared itself an autonomous self-governing state within Somalia in 1998. Unlike Somaliland, it is not seeking independence from Somalia but favours a decentralised federal system. Its capital is Garoowe and the main port is Bosaso.

1 ***Issa corridor.*** This trade route traverses the Shinile Zone in northern Somali Region, and links Addis Ababa with Djibouti. Ethiopia's oil is imported through the port of Djibouti and transported through Shinile to Addis Ababa and other highland towns. People from Shinile do not appear to profit as much as might be expected from this good road and well-developed public transport system, even though the Issa corridor is known to be a major route for the contraband trade into Ethiopia.

2 ***Berbera corridor.*** Commodity movements between Somali Region and the Somaliland port of Berbera follow two routes: along the Hargeisa road to Jigjiga and Harar, and along the Burao road into the grazing areas of eastern Jigjiga and Degahbur zones.

2a ***Jigjiga route.*** The largest volume of trade between Somali Region and neighbouring countries occurs on the route linking Harar and Jigjiga to Berbera and Somaliland towns like Hargeisa and Burao, via Hartisheik and the border town of Tog Wachale. Buses and trucks carry *khat*, fresh vegetables, grain and livestock (especially cattle) to Somaliland, and return bringing staple foods, clothes, and various contraband goods such as electronics.

2b ***Hawd route.*** This route serves rural zones and small towns in north-central Somali Region, such as Aware, Gashamo, Degahbur and Fiq, and is oriented towards rural livestock producers and their consumption needs. Major exports include small stock, charcoal, gums and resins, while imports are dominated by staple foods, groceries and household items.

3 ***Bosaso corridor.*** Areas served by this route include the border districts of Boh, Galadi and Warder, in Warder Zone. These areas have a commercialised pastoralist population, which holds large livestock herds. Economically and socio-culturally the zone is oriented towards Puntland, especially the port of Bosaso and the important desert town of Galkayo. People are from the same clan on both sides of the border, there are daily bus services between Warder and Puntland, and the Somali Shilling is the common currency.

4 ***Riverine trading area.*** There are several less well-defined trade routes out of central Somali Region, which connect Gode, Fiq, Korahe and northern Afder Zone with markets in Somalia and Kenya, or link up with the major Berbera and Bosaso trade corridors. Gode town – the former capital of Somali Region – is the main trading centre in this area, attracting imports of consumer goods and foodstuffs for its urban residents, while farmers along the Shabelle river export vegetables and fruit to Somaliland and the city of Mogadishu. Cattle from these zones are trekked north to Berbera, while sheep and goats are trucked to Bosaso.

5 ***"Zone Liban".*** Ethiopian Somalis call the entire southern part of Somali Region "Zone Liban", including Liban Zone itself and neighbouring districts such as Cherati in Afder Zone, which share similar clan backgrounds and dialects. "Zone Liban" is oriented toward northern Kenya as well as southern Somalia. The people of southern Somali Region engage in cross-border trade with the Kenyan towns of Mandera and Moyale, as well as the city of Mogadishu, but not much with the port of Kismayu in recent years, due to civil strife in southern Somalia.

Despite this evidence of a dynamic and complex network of trade routes and commodity flows into and out of Somali Region, some important features of this trading system need to be noted. Firstly, the domination of specific clans and market operators along each trade corridor means that they are not substitutable. If the route used by a pastoralist or trader becomes inaccessible (e.g. due to conflict or insecurity) or the market collapses (e.g. during a drought, or because of a government clampdown on contraband trade), there is often no alternative. This reliance on a single marketing channel makes everyone who depends on this channel extremely vulnerable to a sudden change in market conditions.

During the drought of 2004, for instance, pastoralists in Gashamo complained that traders no longer came to purchase their livestock, so they were unable to offload their animals

even at low prices ("distress sales"), and livestock mortality was higher than it would otherwise have been. This would appear to contradict evidence from famines elsewhere, when traders often stand accused of exploiting livestock owners by buying up animals cheaply and making excess profits. The explanation that traders in Somali Region gave us explained the paradox in terms of market rigidities. When livestock conditions deteriorated in Gashamo and neighbouring districts during 2004, traders found it increasingly difficult to sell these animals to export buyers, who favoured better quality animals from parts of the region that were unaffected by the drought. Not only were drought-affected livestock owners unable to find a market for their animals, livestock traders were unable to move into other markets, since these markets were already served by other traders.

This symbiotic relationship between pastoralists and traders is beneficial to both parties in good times, but both suffered a drastic collapse in incomes during 2004. As a consequence, not only were many pastoralists forced to abandon pastoralism because of the drought, but many traders were also forced to abandon trading altogether.

4.3.3 Market actors

Marketing in Somali Region is much more complicated than the neoclassical model of a producer selling to a consumer at a negotiated market-clearing price, perhaps with a wholesaler or retailer as market intermediaries. Partly because live animals are often involved, partly because much of the trade is informal – even illegal – and crosses national boundaries, and partly because of the complex interrelationship between trade routes and clan territories, there are a large number of market actors between primary producers and final consumers. The result is a marketing system that is far from anonymous and impersonal, but instead is a network of personal and clan-based relationships, with each actor dependent on the others in a way that both protects and constrains their options and opportunities. Although every actor plays a vital role in linking producers with consumers, the multiplicity of intermediaries and the personalised nature of these relationships certainly raise transactions costs, and can increase the vulnerability of the many livelihoods that depend on each marketing chain. The most important of these intermediaries are described here.

- ***Shirkad*** ("company"): six large companies operate out of Hargeisa and Bosaso, where they own large warehouses as well as employing wholesalers and purchasing agents who are active in the ports, the Middle East and Somali Region. Often the *shirkad* provides loans to traders to purchase livestock in Somali Region and bring the animals to the ports, for export to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. They also import shiploads of food, groceries and electronic goods, which they sell on to traders and shopkeepers who supply markets and towns inside Ethiopia. In addition, the *shirkad* often has other business interests, such as money transfers, telecommunications and construction.

- ***Gana'sade*** ("trader"): just below the *shirkad* level are large-scale traders known as *gana'sade*. There are currently several *gana'sade* operating as livestock traders in Jigjiga town, and many more based in large livestock assembly markets such as Tog Wachale and Hartisheik. Importantly, most of this trade is formalised – these traders usually have a modified Letters of Credit arrangement, which allows them to export livestock legally out of Somali Region.

- ***Jeble*** ("pocket"): the name *jeble* reflects their function – they are the "pockets" that provide the capital with which livestock are purchased, other market actors (e.g. *dilala*) are hired, and transporters are paid. Often their capital has been loaned to them by a *shirkad* to fill a specific purchasing order. Other *jeble* live in rural areas and are known as *ursade* ("collectors"), because they buy small numbers of animals in various local ("bush") markets and "collect" them until they have sufficient numbers to transport them to secondary or assembly markets. *Jeble* also facilitate access to markets for pastoralists, sometimes providing clan members with loans in return for guaranteed future sales of animals, or sending vehicles into rural areas to collect sheep and goats and transport them to market, for a percentage of the selling price.

- ***Dilal:*** these middlemen are found in marketplaces throughout the Horn of Africa, facilitating business deals and transactions, especially livestock sales. Each clan has their own *dilal* in every major market who works exclusively for their clan, which means that there is a strong basis of trust between livestock sellers and their *dilal*. It also means that there is little reason for competitiveness between *dilala*, since the volume of business each handles is independent of the volume handled by other *dilala* serving different clans. *Dilala* are especially respected for their knowledge of animals: they can estimate the weight and value of live animals by sight, and they follow trends in market demand and supply closely. They also negotiate prices with traders, and handle the money once the deal is concluded. According to one livestock trader:

  > You cannot go into a market to buy animals without the help of a local *dilal*. How can you guarantee that the animal that you have bought is not a stolen animal whose owners will come after you the next day? The *dilal* will look at the bulls that have come into the market – their size, condition, colour. He will then make an assessment of their worth, and then arrives at the average price that the animals should be quoted at.[20]

- ***Dulsar*** ("put on top"): these are small-scale traders who buy animals and resell them for a small profit, often on the same day and in the same market. Alternatively, they might purchase animals from pastoralists who need to travel immediately back to their village, and keep the animals for a few days until prices rise.
- ***Gesgara'*** ("punch each side"): these are brokers who step in when negotiations between two *dilala* are deadlocked. The *gesgara'* shuttles between the two *dilala* until a compromise is reached – hence the nickname "punch each side" – when each *dilal* pays the same amount to the *gesgara'* as a facilitation fee.
- ***Alamadiye*** ("branders"): the *alama* (sign) is the owner's unique mark, found on every animal. *Alamadiye* are present in every major market, branding animals immediately after purchase.
- ***Cawse*** ("grass-workers"): these people keep stocks of grass and hay at the salesyards, which they sell to pastoralists and traders to feed the animals that are being held in pens before being sold.
- ***Gara'a*** ("beaters"): they operate in cattle and camel markets, ensuring that bulls do not fight one another or injure themselves while penned, being loaded into lorries, or in slaughterhouses.
- ***Ra'ii*** ("followers"): these are the "trekkers" who move animals on foot between salesyards, which can be a distance of a hundred kilometres or more and a journey of many days.

4.3.4 Women traders

Women have always been actively engaged in trading in Somali Region, and their numbers are rising. Itinerant women traders have acquired mildly derogatory labels – "*khararaf*" and "*asha kushi*" – because of their recent proliferation and their willingness to accept tiny profit margins. Nearly all retailers of *khat* are women, especially in urban areas. The wealthiest business person in Jigjiga town is a woman who exports *khat* to Somaliland and abroad. In the livestock sector, most of the sheep and goats traded in the region are bought and sold by women, who are also entering the cattle trade, though mainly in local markets rather than long-distance trading. There appear to be few cultural impediments to Somali women engaging in trade (despite this being a Muslim society, women are not prohibited from working outside the home), except those related to the gendered division of household reproductive roles – such as inability to travel far from home, because of child-care duties and other domestic responsibilities.

20 Livestock trader, Tog Wachale market.

Box 4.1 **Women livestock traders in Degahbur**

There is a group of 14 women who live in Degahbur and have been bringing large stock from their home area to Jigjiga market for 5–6 years. They purchase animals in Degahbur and Fiq Zone. It takes 7–10 days to collect a marketable herd. On every trip each woman brings in approximately 20 animals. Two *ra'ii* trek the animals to Jigjiga, charging 40 Birr per head, where another 10 Birr is paid per head for a *dilal*. Return fares to Garbo for the traders are 100 Birr. They also spend about 10 Birr per day on living expenses. Total taxes and market fees paid average 10 Birr per head. After handing over the animals to a *khidmad* (trustee) in Jigjiga, who facilitates their sale at a charge of 10 Birr per animal, the women return to Degahbur. The fare back to Degahbur is 30 Birr. Large bulls are sold for 2,300 to 2,500 Birr, while the smaller bulls fetch 800–900 Birr. Profit margins are tight, and the maximum profit made per animal is 200 Birr. However, losses can be incurred in the same range – up to 200 Birr per animal – depending on market conditions.

Source: Interview with a woman trader, Hartisheik market.

Most of the other constraints that women traders face are practical – difficulties in raising working capital, or risks to their personal safety if they travel unaccompanied. One solution to the working capital constraint is through "traditional" savings and credit groups. Many women participate in these groups, paying in small amounts of cash and withdrawing lump sums at occasional intervals, which can be used to purchase commodities or livestock for trading activities. Women are said to save more than men, because they chew *khat* less and do not expend their resources on patronage politics. This last point gives women a unique advantage over men in trading. Since women tend to be only peripherally involved in inter-clan conflicts, they can work with other women across clans to build solidarity and resolve conflicts "behind the scenes". Women cross clan boundaries more easily than men. This is an important attribute in trading, since women who enter rival clan territories are seen as less threatening than men. Box 4.1 shows how women work together to scale up their trading activities to a viable level.

Women are also becoming active as various categories of market agents. Of about 70 *jeble* currently active in Tog Wachale market, 25 are women, and there are equal numbers of male and female *dilala*. In some markets, most of the *dulsar* (who buy and resell animals the same day for a small profit margin) are women. Women are also heavily engaged in the marketing of animal by-products – milk, butter, *ghee*, hides and meat. In the past 10 to 15 years, women have come to dominate the abattoirs and butcheries in Jigjiga and Hargeisa, especially for sheep and goats.

4.4 Livestock prices

The main determinant of pastoralist and trader incomes is livestock prices, but prices of animals vary greatly between markets and over time. Some factors that influence price determination are related to the condition of each animal, such as its breed (e.g. the dominant and preferred breed of sheep in Somali Region is the Berbera Blackhead), age, sex, weight and preferred traits such as colouring and body shape, which affect breeding potential.

A second set of factors that affect livestock prices is market conditions. Dominant among these are temporary rises or falls in demand or supply (e.g. a collapse of supply due to animal disease or drought-related mortality, or a collapse in demand due to the Saudi ban on Somali livestock). Spatial variations in livestock prices are also observed across the region, due either to differences in transport and transactions costs on different trade routes, or to market inefficiencies such as traders taking higher profit margins in monopolistic markets.

Another complex factor influencing prices is seasonality, which affects the condition of animals and is associated with particular patterns of market demand. In general, prices are lower during the dry seasons, when animals lose weight, and higher during the rainy seasons, when the animals are fatter. Specific trends, season by season, are as follows.

- ***Jilaal:*** during the hot dry season (January to March), livestock are cheap because pasture and water are scarce, animals are susceptible to diseases, and pastoralists are in great need for purchased food, so they sell their animals at almost any price.
- ***Gu':*** during the first rainy period (April to June), livestock prices rise as pasture and water are available. Animals are calving and are in milk, and pastoralists are under less pressure to purchase food, so the volumes offered for sale are low. Instead of selling, many pastoralists are buying animals for fattening, pushing up prices.
- ***Hagaa:*** during the dry season (July to September), prices fall as animals lose weight and exports are limited by shipping constraints, some caused by strong winds blowing in the Red Sea.
- ***Deyr:*** during this second rainy season (October to December), prices start to rise again.

From the pastoralist perspective, livestock marketing seasons are either good or bad, according to supply and demand conditions rather than rainfall – though the two are related. Good seasons are *Iga ibi* (literally, "please sell to me!"), when demand for livestock is so high that it becomes a seller's market, and traders offer high prices to induce pastoralists to sell – as much as 250 Birr for a sheep. The second season is *Iga ibso* ("please buy!"), when demand for livestock is low, and pastoralists "beg" traders to buy their animals. During droughts, the price of a sheep can fall as low as 60 Birr. Pastoralists who are forced to sell at these "distress prices" often say: '*Wan tuurey*' ('I threw away the animal').

Apart from climatic seasonality, another powerful seasonal feature of livestock marketing is religious festivals and holidays. Most significantly, demand for sheep and goats peaks between the Islamic months of Ramadan and the *Idd Arafa* – the exact timing of which varies from year to year – when prices also peak. During the *Idd ul Haj*, pilgrims to Mecca and Moslems who remain at home are required to slaughter a sheep. Large numbers of live sheep are brought into Saudi Arabia, mostly imported from "greater Somalia" (including Somali Region) and Sudan.

If all the above factors are known, market analysts can predict sales volumes and price trends by extrapolating from trends in previous years, allowing for inflation and exchange rate fluctuations. However, a final set of factors is political interference, which complicates the analysis and introduces distortions that are not found in well-functioning markets. Because of its unpredictability, political intervention raises marketing risks for all actors in the marketing chain. In Somali Region, political factors include border closures and government clampdowns on contraband trade, including confiscating commodities. Some of these political factors are examined in the following section.

4.5 Marketing constraints in Somali Region

Livestock marketing generates substantial revenues and provides employment for large numbers of people in Somali Region. However, returns to livestock marketing are variable across markets and seasons, and extremely unpredictable at all times. This reflects the paradox of wealth plus vulnerability that is identified in this research as a defining feature of pastoralist livelihoods in Somali Region: trading can yield high incomes for all involved, but it is also highly risky. Some of these risks – such as drought and disease – are endemic to livestock production and marketing in arid and semi-arid environments everywhere. Other risks are a function of the complex nature of mobile, clan-based societies and their relationship to key productive natural resources (livestock, water, pasture). A third set of risks relates to policies and politics, which are generally disruptive and undermining, as bureaucrats and politicians attempt to control and "formalise" informal trade.

The pastoralist production system, developed over literally hundreds of years, has found ways of reducing some of these risks. Construction of wells and *berkad* provides access to water during dry seasons and droughts. Migration with animals in search of pasture maximises utilisation of the rangelands. Veterinary services and drugs – though scandalously

undersupplied in Somali Region – reduce livestock losses to disease. Disputes between clans over access to resources do occur, but are controlled through conflict resolution mechanisms and informal institutions such as compensation payments.

Similarly, the pastoral marketing system has evolved mechanisms for mitigating some of the risks associated with livestock trading. Informal trade operates with a complete lack of formal finance and credit, and in the absence of legally enforceable contracts. As noted above, trade routes are controlled by clans based on territorial boundaries, and key marketing agents such as *dilala* tend to come from the same clan as the seller, which introduces a high degree of trust into market transactions. Because of the long distances and security hazards on many routes, control over commodities is often passed on to many different agents along the route, with trekkers and traders specialising in working in familiar territory which they understand well. Ownership of the same livestock can change hands several times between the primary producer and the final consumer. For example, a bull reared in rural east Hararghe might be bought and sold five or six times within a few weeks before being slaughtered in Saudi Arabia: first it is taken to Babile market where a trader buys and resells it in Jigjiga market, where another trader buys it and pays a trekker to walk it to the border, then a third trader buys the bull and sells it to a Somaliland trader in Tog Wachale, who takes it to Berbera port where it is shipped to Yemen, bought by a Yemeni trader who transports it to Saudi Arabia, where it is sold to a Saudi trader who sells it to a butcher or supermarket chain. This "division of labour" serves the intended purpose of spreading the costs and risks – and benefits – of trade among many market actors, but it also raises transactions costs and reduces the returns to producers.

The impact of drought risks on trade is examined elsewhere in this report. Four main sources of risk in informal marketing are examined here: (1) conflict and insecurity; (2) Saudi import bans; (3) Government of Ethiopia policies; (4) exchange rate fluctuations and currency bans.

4.5.1 Conflict and civil insecurity

Traders interviewed in eastern parts of Somali Region were unanimous that 1991 and 1992 were the most difficult years for trading in their lifetime, because there was no functioning government in either Somalia or Ethiopia at that time. Somalia's civil war was coming to a head, and the Derg regime had just been overthrown in Ethiopia. During this period of lawlessness and escalating violence, there was widespread looting of property, especially of vehicles and livestock. Many traders lost all their property to armed bandits or militia. Some beneficial effects from the resultant dispersal of Somalis throughout the world were mentioned, however. Many individuals who fled to the Middle East and the West found new livelihoods and started supporting relatives back home. Many sent cash remittances, some sent pick-up trucks and lorries to support trading activities in the pastoral areas, while others provided start-up capital or working capital. Before the Somali civil war there were only ten vehicles in Bokh District, but by 2004 every trading centre in Bokh had five or six locally owned vehicles. In Jigjiga town, members of the "Somali diaspora" have financed several hotels, residential and commercial buildings, and businesses, especially trading enterprises.

4.5.2 Saudi import bans

The biggest and most lucrative market for Somali livestock producers and traders is the Middle East, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which imports literally millions of sheep, goats and cattle every year, especially during Ramadan and the *Haj*. Within the last ten years, however, this market has twice been severely disrupted by the imposition of a ban on livestock imports from the Horn of Africa. The first ban was imposed by Saudi Arabia, for just over a year between February 1998 and April 1999. The reason for this ban was an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, which caused widespread livestock mortality, especially of sheep. The effects on trade were more dramatic than the mortality itself. Livestock prices fell throughout East Africa, and exports through the port of Berbera in Somaliland – about half of which originate from Somali Region –

Box 4.2 **Impact of the 1998 Saudi livestock ban on Somali traders**

'I have been a trader for 12 years, mainly in importing goods like food and clothes, and exporting livestock. I used to export livestock to Saudi Arabia, but now I only take animals to Hargeisa and Hartisheik. The worst year for me was 1998, when I bought 260 animals at a cost of 180 Birr each. The Saudi ban caught me before I exported the animals, and I had to hold them for one year at an additional expense of 70 Birr per animal. After losing some of the animals to disease, and realising that the ban may take longer to be lifted, I trekked the animals to Djibouti hoping that I could export them from there. Eventually I had to sell them at a loss in Djibouti.'

Source: Interview with a trader in Hartisheik.

immediately halved, from over three million head in 1997 to 1.5 million head in 1998, resulting in estimated revenue losses of US$100 million (FSAU 2004). One trader's experience of the 1998 livestock ban is presented in Box 4.2.

The fact that the livestock export market did not completely collapse in 1998 was due to the fact that other Gulf countries continued to import East African livestock, and many animals were in fact smuggled into Saudi Arabia through Yemen. Although the embargo was partially lifted in 1999, a second outbreak of Rift Valley Fever – actually in southern Saudi Arabia, but imported animals were blamed – provoked a second and more comprehensive ban in September 2000. Six Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen) banned all livestock imports from eight East African countries, including Ethiopia. During 2001, most of the Gulf states independently announced that they were lifting the ban, but Saudi Arabia – by far the largest market for live animals from East Africa – had yet to do so by late 2005.

The consequences of both livestock bans can be clearly seen in Figure 4.1, which shows dramatic collapses of livestock exports through Somaliland in 1998 and in 2001. The first shock followed three years of exports exceeding three million head; the second followed two years when exports had exceeded two million head. The figures also reveal that recovery of trade after each shock is only partial – export volumes in the two years after each embargo was lifted remain substantially lower than in the two years before each ban was imposed. One explanation is that other suppliers (e.g. from Australia and New Zealand) seized the opportunity to enter the lucrative Saudi Arabian market, especially for live sheep, thereby displacing east African suppliers.

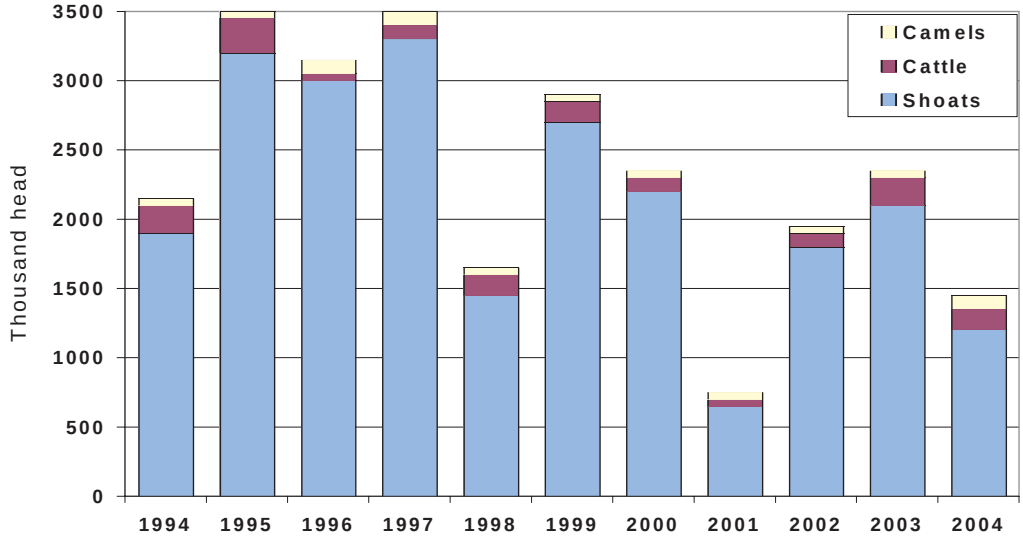
A second reason for the incomplete recovery of livestock exports is that many traders and agents working in East African markets were driven out of business by losses incurred when the bans were imposed. This was exacerbated by the market rigidities discussed above, which means that traders are locked into particular trade corridors and unable to switch to alternative routes or markets. This consequence of the ban was confirmed by a large trader interviewed in mid-2005.

> The biggest threat to our business as livestock traders is the tremendous effect of the governments in the Gulf when they exercise their power by locking us out of their markets. So far nothing equals the ban placed by Saudi Arabia on importing of livestock from the Horn of Africa. Two-thirds of the livestock traders quit the business after the ban. Many were extinguished by heavy losses … Today the situation is improving, as Yemen and the Arab Emirates take our animals. But the kind of livestock export volumes that were realised before the ban have not yet been realised since.[21]

A related and ongoing problem faced by traders in the Horn is that marketing costs have risen, particularly for those engaged in the risky (but highly competitive) business of smuggling animals into Saudi Arabia through Yemen. This circuitous route involves hiring extra market agents, payment of bribes to two or three sets of border guards, and higher

21 Interview with owner of Farole Livestock Enterprises.

Figure 4.1 **Annual livestock exports from Berbera and Bosaso ports, 1994–2004**



Source: FSAU (2004: 11).

risks of animals not being sold in terminal markets. Sometimes boats are sunk in the Red Sea, with the loss of all animals on board. These additional costs and risks have eroded profit margins to such an extent that many traders can no longer make a living.

A final observation about the livestock ban is that Somali pastoralists and traders received no support from the Government of Ethiopia, in negotiating with governments in the Gulf to lift the ban. The Government of Kenya, by contrast, worked hard to re-open its livestock export markets, and achieved some success by approaching the Red Sea Livestock Commission and several Gulf states directly. It might be assumed that the Ethiopian government has no interest in getting this ban lifted, given their hostility to informal exports and its many attempts to regulate or eradicate this trade, as discussed below.

4.5.3 Government policies with respect to traders

The Government of Ethiopia has persistently attempted to regulate the marketing of livestock and commodities into and out of Somali Region. It has decreed informal cross-border trade to be illegal – both exports of livestock and imports of "contraband" goods. The official reason for these policies is that Ethiopia is "losing" large numbers of livestock and the Ministry of Finance is losing substantial customs revenue from export taxes and import duties. Ethiopia's Customs Proclamation (Article 74) states that anybody found using, holding, hiding, selling or distributing goods which have not been subject to customs procedures shall be fined the equivalent of the appropriate duty, the goods will be confiscated and individuals could face up to five years imprisonment.[22] Traders believe that this proclamation effectively criminalises trade, which they believe should be liberalised. 'We are tired of being treated like criminals, when we are just trying to make a living.'[23] Since the behaviour of border officials is often unpredictable and arbitrary, and to avoid paying taxes, traders often avoid crossing at official frontier points. Incidents of harassment of traders by Ethiopian officials – the military, the police and the Customs Authority – have been reported from all parts of Somali Region, including raids on urban markets as well as along rural trading routes, even extending to foreign traders bringing commodities into Ethiopia.

22 The Ethiopian Customs Authority includes as one component of its Mission Statement: 'It controls and prevents illegal trades that are detrimental to social well-being and economic development' (www.ethiomarket.com/ecua/index.htm, accessed 28 December 2005).

23 Male trader, Hartisheik market.

Box 4.3 **Government harassment of livestock traders, 2004–5**

In March 2004, two businessmen from Jigjiga zone bought 200 bulls from Gode, which they started trekking to Hartisheik market. On the road, however, these bulls were confiscated by government officials, ostensibly for security reasons.

In May 2005, 300 bulls heading towards Bosaso belonging to Bokh-based traders were seized by security forces near Shilabo. As this was during a period when all overland transport along the Bosaso corridor was halted, panic spread along the route.

Three traders in northern Kenya decided to bring about 300 sheep and goats to Moyale market, where demand for livestock from buying agents of the El-Fora trading company was high. Having obtained the necessary livestock movement permits in Kenya, they drove their flock to an official frontier crossing-point. They were stopped at the border by the Ethiopian Customs Authority, arrested as livestock smugglers, and locked up for three weeks. Their animals were confiscated and auctioned off in Moyale by the Ethiopian officials.

Source: Interviews with traders in Somali Region.

In February 2002, for instance, the Ethiopian authorities closed the border posts with Somalia and Somaliland, and deployed security forces along the length of the border. Entire lorry-loads of livestock intended for export, as well as commodities being imported into Somali Region, were confiscated without compensation. Because of the dependence of many pastoralists and urban residents on imported food, the banning order on food imports was soon lifted, but for other imports and for livestock exports the border remained closed until August 2002, causing great damage to the region's economy. At the same time, all vehicles that were not registered in Ethiopia were banned from operating inside Somali Region. This has resulted in large numbers of animals destined for export being trekked long distances, instead of being trucked in vehicles from Somaliland, as before.

A more recent action against contraband trade was launched by the Government of Ethiopia in mid-March 2005, when more than 50 trucks bringing food from Bosaso in Puntland were seized and impounded at police stations and military compounds in Warder, Korahe and Gode zones. In Warder, over 30 trucks were seized, each loaded with more than 20 tons of food items – wheat, rice, pasta, cooking oil and sugar. This immediately removed at least 600 tons of food from markets in Somali Region. At the same time, many trucks loaded with up to 360–380 sheep and goats each, for export through Bosaso, were also impounded. All movement of trucks, commodities and livestock along the Bosaso trade corridor virtually ceased. Since Bosaso is the main port for importing staple food items into parts of eastern Somali Region that do not cultivate crops, and since exports of livestock finance the imports of these foods, this disruption to market supplies and the livestock trade was extremely serious for household food security in these zones. By early April, the 80+ trucks were still impounded, food stocks in many markets were running low, and food prices started to rise. Then on 9 April, a combined force of Ethiopian military, police and local security officers ransacked the "Taiwan" markets of Jigjiga and Harar towns, confiscating large stocks of imported clothes and other items classified as contraband goods. Panic gripped the region, and prices of basic commodities spiralled as people stocked up in anticipation of further disruptions to market supplies. Instead, on 14 April the food trucks were finally released, and prices started to fall as supplies were delivered to grocery stores and rural markets.

Traders in Hartisheik were among the worst affected by this action. As one trader said: 'The little light we had in this Hartisheik market has been just been turned out by the Ethiopian government, in its new war on contraband'[24] Some more recent incidents (from many collected in our fieldwork) of harassment of traders and confiscation of their property are summarised in Box 4.3.

24 Woman trader, Hartisheik market.

Box 4.4 **Case study: contraband trader in Jigjiga**

'I trade in bulk food, which I bring into Jigjiga at reasonable prices. Yes, my business can be said to be contraband, which is extremely risky, as you know. What can I do, when trying to bring in anything legally is made so impossible? I do not see the Finance as anything except legal bandits, as they search for us day and night, and will use whatever weapons they have to loot us of our property. If they stop us, they will take everything we have, including the vehicles that we are using. If they do not manage to stop us, they will shoot at us. Many of our people have died in the bullets that they rain on us mercilessly, there are many injured and maimed people living in Jigjiga who have had these experiences. The regional government is developing a system of licensing, whereby we are allowed to import food items worth up to US$ 10,000. But this system is not recognised by the Customs Authorities in Jigjiga who report directly to Addis Ababa. Whatever licence the regional authorities give us, we are hunted down along the routes to the border, and force is used to take away our property. After a number of months, all the confiscated property is sold into the local and highland markets by government, at lower prices than market rates. All the money realised then is declared by government to be state income – the original owner is never compensated at all!'

Source: Interview with a trader in Jigjiga town.

Apart from the direct losses that seizure of property and disruption to markets causes traders, the uncertainty created by the unpredictability of government policies and interventions raises the risks that traders face and discourages some from continuing.

> Many businesses have collapsed under the weight of worry as their property runs the risk of confiscation by the Finance authorities, and the gambling nature of the trade is beyond the capacity of many. One can only sustain a small number of total losses of one's property before one has to exit the business.[25]

The 'weight of worry' and the threat of 'total losses of one's property' have real impacts on profit margins, which needs to be taken into consideration, given the complaints often levelled against traders that they exploit pastoralists and farmers by extracting excessive margins. A graphic exposition of the physical dangers as well as economic risks that contraband traders face in Somali Region is provided by a food trader in Jigjiga market (Box 4.4).

4.5.4 Exchange rate variability and currency bans

Several currencies are used in Somali Region, and exchange rates between them are variable and unpredictable. The interconnectedness of the economies of Somali Region and Somalia (including Somaliland and Puntland) is revealed by the fact that the common currency in much of rural Somali Region is the Somalia Shilling, while the Somaliland Shilling is also used in some markets near the Somalia border. The United States Dollar is used for large deals, and is the basis for calculating exchange rates.[26] Most of the food and goods sold in Somali towns are priced in US dollars, which has effectively "dollarised" the local economies. The fall of the dollar in 2004 had a dramatic impact on both Somali currencies, devaluing them and resulting in loss of wealth for those holding shillings. Further devaluations occur whenever warlords in Somalia print new banknotes. The effects of these devaluations are transmitted into Somali Region because livestock exports to Bosaso and Mogadishu are priced in Somali currencies. The vulnerability that currency fluctuations introduce to trading activities is reflected in one trader's story (Box 4.5).

25 Male trader, Hartisheik market.

26 In late 2004, the following exchange rates prevailed in rural Somali Region: US$ 100 = Somaliland Shillings 584,800 = Somali Shillings 1,500,000 = Ethiopian Birr 890; Ethiopian Birr 100 = Somaliland Shillings 68,000 = Somali Shillings 150,000.

Box 4.5 **Case study: impacts of currency fluctuations on Somali traders**

'I used to work for the Ogaden Welfare Society, which was the largest local NGO working in the Somali Region. In 2002, the OWS was closed down by the government for security reasons, and senior officials landed in prison. Along with many junior workers, I lost my job. When I found myself jobless, I started trading, using my small savings. I used to buy cattle from the southern parts of Somali Region, which I would transport to the border towns of Moyale and Mandera in Kenya. I would carry back small "baggage" materials on my way back. However, I encountered great difficulties due to the fluctuating value of the currencies and their rising or lowering exchange rate. The sheer amounts by which these changes would happen, and the fact that I had no idea why and when one particular currency would go up or down made my work similar to wild gambling! The margins that I was operating at were quite narrow and sharp. After a successful sale in Kenya, I would have large amounts of cash in local currency in my possession. Items that I would purchase for resale in Ethiopia by then may have become more expensive in Kenya! Somehow, I had to transfer my money back into Ethiopian currency without losing the value of what I had.'

Source: Interview with a trader in Moyale.

In May 2005, the Government of Ethiopia banned the use of any currency other than the Birr for economic transactions inside Ethiopia's borders. The intention was to stamp out trade conducted with Somaliland Shillings or Somalia Shillings in Somali Region. Since the policy was introduced overnight, Ethiopians holding these currencies incurred heavy losses, and traders working with the Somalia currencies stopped coming to areas where the policy was enforced effectively. In parts of central Somali Region such as Korahe Zone, the livestock trade declined dramatically and many households and businesses were severely affected. Shilabo District was particularly badly hit. Before the currency ban and the "war on contraband", approximately 40 truckloads of sheep and goats were exported from Shilabo town every month, but this trade ceased altogether. Many businesses in the town closed down. A physical count of businesses operating in Shilabo town before and after the government's trade and currency restrictions found that more than half the wholesalers (32 of 46), retail stores (57 of 98), tea-shops (49 of 82) and restaurants (15 of 22) had closed by May 2005. This is another example of unpredictable policy changes having drastic negative impacts on trading, and livelihoods that depend on trading income, in Somali Region.

5 Farming and agro-pastoralism

Although lowland areas are often perceived as arid regions with no potential for agriculture, this perception is almost always inaccurate. In many pastoralist areas, livestock rearers co-exist with farmers, and are often cultivating crops themselves. It is not surprising, therefore, that Somali Region supports a diversity of livestock-based, crop-based, and mixed (agro-pastoral) livelihood systems. The region has many seasonal rivers that allow riverine farming, there are irrigation schemes, and in some districts rainfall is adequate to support rain-fed farming. There are, of course, extensive parts of the region that are too dry for farming, notably in the eastern *Hawd* zones of Warder as well as parts of Degahbur and Korahe.

This chapter presents information on agricultural activities pursued by households in Somali Region, drawing on data from our household survey as well as qualitative research. The chapter begins with a brief description of the different types of crop farming practised in the region, and then considers land ownership and access to land. The next section summarises crop harvests in our survey households, and the chapter concludes by discussing trends in crop production over time.

5.1 Farming systems in Somali Region

There are two distinct rainfall patterns in Somali Region, which define two dominant farming systems. *Riverine farming* is practised along the banks of the perennial rivers, the Shabelle and Dawa/Ganale in central and southern Somali Region. In these low-lying areas, the long rains (*Gu'*) fall from April to June, and this is also the planting season. The short rains (*Deyr*) fall between October and December, but are considered unreliable by farmers. Since total rainfall is inadequate for rain-fed agriculture, farming occurs along riverbanks and in river valleys, and is dominated by Bantu Somalis. Low-input methods are used, including human labour, hand-hoes and traditional irrigation methods such as furrows and channels, though mechanical pumps are used to divert river water to some fields. After the harvest, during the hot dry *Jilaal* season (January to March), there is little agricultural activity and farmers consume their harvests. Once their granaries are exhausted, they turn to the market for food, using income earned from sales of cash crops (e.g. onions, common in Kelafo) or income-generating activities (e.g. making baskets and mats, common in Dolo Odo). Following the recent series of droughts, increasing numbers of people rely on food aid or assistance from relatives and friends.

In the northern Somali zones of Shinile and Jigjiga, a different rainfall pattern prevails. A third rainy season – *Karan*, between August and September – provides sufficient moisture and a growing season that is lengthy enough to allow the cultivation of crops, even long-maturing varieties. *Rainfed agriculture* is practised by Somalis on the Jigjiga plans. Farming methods are similar to those in the Ethiopian highlands – smallholders use family labour and cultivate with oxen and ploughs. A third farming system found in Somali Region could be described as *opportunistic agriculture*, which exploits niches within pastoralist areas, such as along seasonal river beds or in valley bottoms that retain moisture after the rains. Furrows and channels are used to harvest rainwater. Much of this farming is practised by pastoralists as a secondary activity that yields modest harvests in most years and significant harvests only occasionally.

Staple cereals are cultivated by almost every farmer and agro-pastoralist in Somali Region. In riverine farming communities, maize and sorghum are the preferred staples. Agro-pastoralists throughout the region also favour maize and sorghum. On the Jigjiga plains, however, farmers plant wheat and barley as well as maize, which they sell in Jigjiga town. However, since the influx of food aid (mostly in the form of American and European wheat) after the famine of 2000, prices for local wheat have collapsed in the face of competition from sales of food aid, and many Jigjiga farmers have stopped cultivating wheat altogether. The plains farmers of northern Somali Region also farm pulses (chickpeas, lentils) and root crops (potatoes), and small amounts of vegetables, for both consumption and sale. Riverine farming in southern and central Somali Region is more diversified, with commercial volumes of vegetables (especially onions), fruit and oil seeds being produced for domestic markets and export to neighbouring countries.

Apart from large-scale irrigated agricultural schemes, farming in Somali Region can be described as "low input, low output" agriculture. Ox-ploughs are used, but there is no irrigation technology on family farms. Farmers dig furrows (called *mangat* or *moos*) to channel water from rivers or ponds to their plots. In Dolo Odo, erratic rainfall is described as the main problem that farmers face and the need for irrigation pumps is widely recognised, but this machinery is beyond the purchasing power of local farmers, and no credit or extension services are available. Very few farmers apply chemical fertiliser – only one in a hundred (n=6/489 =1.2 per cent) in our survey, all in Kelafo District. Moreover, despite high levels of livestock ownership throughout the region, very few farmers or agro-pastoralists apply animal manure – just one in 20 in our survey (n=23/489 =4.7 per cent), mostly farmers on the Jigjiga plains.

5.2 Land ownership and access

Constitutionally, land in Ethiopia is jointly owned by the state and the people. In practice, this means that individual citizens cannot buy and sell land. Instead, land rights are allocated. Almost half the households we surveyed own rights to land, mostly for farming

Table 5.1 **Farming and access to land, by district**

District	Land-owning households	Farmed last season	*If farmed last season:* Farmed ownland	Sharecropped in land	Rented in land
Pastoralist	**7%**	**2%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**
Gashamo	0%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shinile	20%	6%	100%	0%	0%
Shilabo	1%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Agro-pastoral	**78%**	**75%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**
Kebribayah	97%	97%	100%	0%	0%
Doboweyn	53%	45%	100%	0%	0%
Cherati	83%	83%	99%	1%	0%
Farmer	**89%**	**86%**	**97%**	**3%**	**1%**
Kelafo	95%	93%	98%	1%	4%
Dolo Odo	85%	86%	94%	6%	0%
Jigjiga rural	86%	78%	100%	1%	0%
Urban	**2%**	**1%**	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**
Jigjiga town	1%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gode	2%	1%	100%	0%	0%
Total	**523 (47.5%)**	**489 (44.5%)**	**483 (98.9%)**	**9 (1.1%)**	**4 (0.5%)**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,091).

(n=523/1,091 =47.5 per cent). However, this average conceals a reality of two extremes, with "ownership" of land being close to universal in some districts but close to zero in others. In Kelafo (95 per cent) and Kebribayah (97 per cent) almost all households own land, while in Cherati, Dolo Odo and rural Jigjiga over 80 per cent own land. In our Gashamo, Shilabo and both urban samples, on the other hand, almost no household owns any land. Only in agro-pastoralist Doboweyn (53 per cent) is the sample divided roughly equally between households that own some land and those that do not (Table 5.1).

Slightly fewer households farmed in the previous season than own land (n=489/1,091 =44.5 per cent). Farming closely follows land ownership, with more than 80 per cent of households in Cherati and Dolo Odo, and over 90 per cent in Kelafo and Kebribayah, engaged in farming, but no sampled households farming in the pastoralist districts of Shinile and Shilabo, and only one farmer in either urban sample (in Gode). In Doboweyn, where just over half of the 100 households owns any land (n=53), just under half are actively farming (n=45).

Almost all households who farmed last season farmed their own land in the last farming season (n=483/489 =98.9 per cent). Nine households sharecropped in some land, and four rented in some land (Table 5.1). No farming households reported having access to free land from someone else. No households reported sharecropping out, renting out or giving free access to any of their own land. In general, land rental markets appear to be less developed in Somali Region than in highland areas, where severe land scarcities exist.

Access to arable land is constrained in some farming communities, but not all. Along riverbanks, most arable land is allocated and under more or less permanent cultivation. Families divide their plots among their relatives and most land is inherited. Most farmers are satisfied with their landholdings, perhaps because the land they can farm is constrained by the availability of family labour, rather than the availability of land. In our survey, 78 per cent of farmers and agro-pastoralists (n=379/484) reported that they have enough land for their farming. The highest proportion of households claiming to have inadequate farmland was in

Table 5.2 **Most recent harvests, by district**

District	Farmers	Harvest (kg)	Consumed (kg)	Sold (kg)	Given away (kg)
Kelafo	93	1,147	503 (44%)	505 (44%)	139 (12%)
Dolo Odo	86	443	275 (62%)	114 (26%)	54 (12%)
Jigjiga rural	78	447	318 (71%)	75 (17%)	54 (12%)
Kebribayah	97	237	196 (83%)	17 (7%)	24 (10%)
Doboweyn	45	533	216 (41%)	233 (44%)	83 (16%)
Cherati	83	332	262 (79%)	24 (7%)	46 (14%)
Average	**440**	**527**	**311 (59%)**	**152 (29%)**	**64 (12%)**

Source: Household survey data (n=484) (farming and agro-pastoralists households only).

agro-pastoralist Kebribayah (45 per cent), where average farm sizes are 11 *qodi*, or 1.4 hectares – larger than average farms in highland Ethiopia.

As in highland Ethiopia, though, landlessness in farming communities is closely associated with poverty. Because arable land is scarce in lowland Somali Region, landlessness is increasing. Among the riverine farmers of Kelafo District, the landless are considered to be poorer and more vulnerable than those with land.

> There are many people these days without land. They survive by *iskutab* [sharecropping]. Others just work on farms to get their daily bread. The situation is caused by an increase in population without an expansion in land size. The landless are sometimes assisted by their relatives, who give them a piece of land to farm for some time.[27]

5.3 Harvests

Farmers in our survey were asked about their most recent harvest. Table 5.2 summarises the total production of major crops cultivated (cereals, pulses and vegetables), and how this harvest was used (consumed, sold or given away). Although every farming household grows staple cereals to meet household subsistence needs, it is significant that most farmers and many agro-pastoralists are selling some proportion of their produce. By far the largest harvests were recorded in Kelafo District. Most of these riverine farmers are producing onions for sale, and almost half their harvest (44 per cent) is sold. In other districts, farming for consumption dominates, and smaller proportions of the harvest are marketed – as low as 7 per cent in agro-pastoralist Kebribayah and Cherati Districts, from smaller than average harvests. Also significant is the proportion of the harvest that is given away rather than consumed or sold – at least 10 per cent in every district, even where harvests are small. Crop donations are made either for *zakaat* or other religious and social obligations, or to provide assistance to struggling relatives and neighbours.

In general, agro-pastoralists cultivate food crops to minimise the number of livestock they have to sell to buy cereals. One agro-pastoralist household from Doboweyn that farms 10 *qodi* of land (1¼ hectares) harvested six 50-kg sacks of maize and two sacks of sorghum in 2004, a total of 400kg. All of this grain was consumed by the household – none of it was sold. Another household in Cherati farms maize for food, and sells charcoal, firewood and grass for cash income. Despite owning several head of cattle, sheep and goats, they rarely sell their livestock for cash. ('We only sell our animals when there is no food at all in the house. When it's a must I will sell one animal.') Many agro-pastoralists and farmers pursue this mixed strategy of growing maize or sorghum for food, selling firewood or charcoal for cash, and selling livestock only if and when a consumption gap remains, for instance in

27 Elder, Kelafo District.

Box 5.1 **Case study: riverine farmer**

Like most residents of Afdub Kebelle, Abdullahi belongs to the Rer Bare clan, who are descended from Bantu people who came to Kelafo District many decades ago. Abdullahi has two wives and 11 children, who live in two households with their mothers – Abdullahi divides his time between the two mother-centred homes. The family farms sorghum and maize on three hectares of land on the banks of the Shabelle river. Abdullahi inherited this land from his grandfather. Abdullahi's oldest son is 32 years old. He has married and is now living in his own household, farming a plot allocated to him from the family's land. All the other children work on the family farm and help with tilling, planting, weeding and harvesting. Most of the harvest is consumed by the family, with any surplus production sold on the local market for cash to buy basic necessities like sugar and cooking oil. Abdullahi owns a small flock of sheep and goats, some of which are sold to buy food in years when sorghum and maize production is insufficient. Abdullahi also owns two donkeys, one for each of his households to transport water for drinking and cooking from the river, and to transport produce to the market.

Source: Qualitative survey interview, Kelafo District.

drought years (Box 5.1). As another agro-pastoralist explained: 'I don't get my income from selling animals. When the drought came is when I sold my sheep to buy food for my family.'

Farmers and agro-pastoralists agree that those doing well are those who farm vegetable crops (onions, tomatoes) or *khat*, as well as staple cereals such as maize and sorghum. Vegetables and *khat* are high-value crops that generate substantial cash income. They also provide insurance against bad rainfall years, when vegetable plots that are watered by hand are less prone to crop failure. A good case study of this "insurance effect" of cash crops is provided in Box 5.2.

5.4 Trends in crop production

Household survey respondents were asked to compare their most recent harvest with harvests in past years – one, two, three, four, five and ten years ago. Results are summarised in Figure 5.1. There are possible signs of a "nostalgia effect" in the perception that harvests ten years ago were considerably better than harvests in more recent years, though this finding might also have some basis in reality. The droughts of 2000 and 2004 are highlighted in Figure 5.1 as years when the highest proportion of farming households suffered below average harvests, with 2000 confirmed as the worst year for farming in recent times.

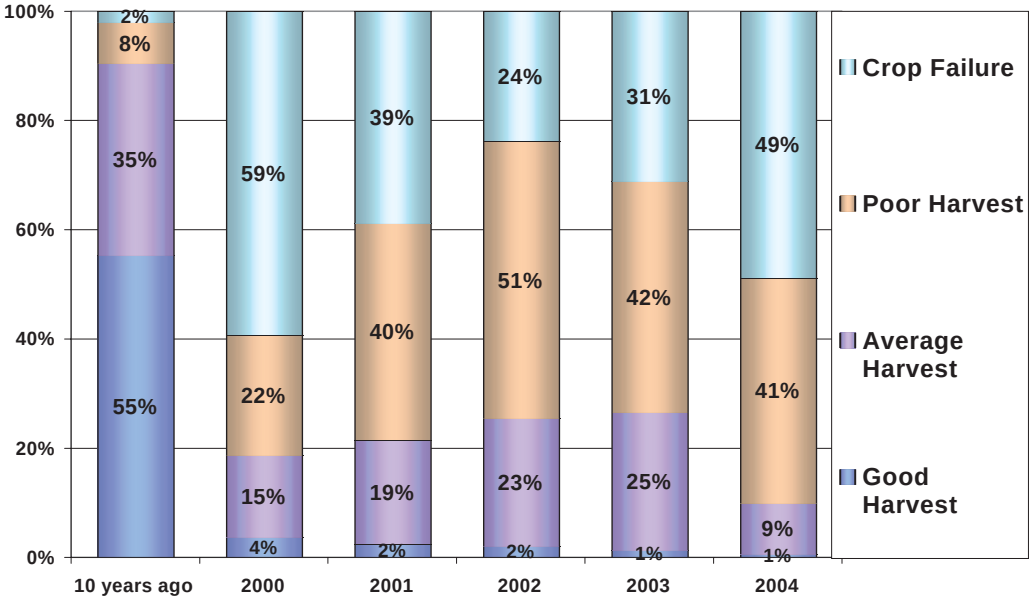
Farming households were also asked why recent harvests have generally been perceived as worse than harvests of the past. Not surprisingly, 'lack of rainfall' – which can be interpreted

Box 5.2 **Case study: agro-pastoralist household**

One agro-pastoralist household with 14 *qodi* planted 7 *qodi* to maize and 3 *qodi* to sorghum in 2004, but harvested no maize or sorghum at all. 'We did not get anything this year, due to shortage of rainfall and the problem of too much sunshine.' Before the drought this household grew maize commercially, harvesting 20 50kg sacks in 2003 and selling them for 500 Birr. Apart from maize and sorghum, this household also planted 1½ *qodi* to *khat*, 1½ *qodi* to tomatoes, and 1 *qodi* to onions. Although their *khat* crop also failed because of the drought, they harvested ten sacks of tomatoes, and were about to harvest their onion at the time of our survey. This was only possible because they bought water and watered the tomatoes and onions regularly through the growing season.

Source: Qualitative survey interview, Kebribayah District.

Figure 5.1 **Perceived trends in harvests, 1994–2004**



Source: Household survey data (n=*484*) (farming and agro-pastoralists households only).

as including erratic rainfall as well as droughts – is overwhelmingly the most frequent response. Around half of all farmers also mentioned 'lack of fertiliser' and 'lack of tools or technology, including irrigation machinery'. These are agricultural inputs that can be purchased or provided to farmers by government agencies or NGOs. The next three factors are all natural – crop pests, natural disasters, destruction of crops by animals or birds. The final explanation was mentioned by relatively few respondents, but is extremely important, as it relates to the chronic lack of agricultural extension services in Somali Region: 'Lack of agricultural experts to show the community how to use the farm'.

Table 5.3 **Reasons why recent harvests are worse than in past years**

Rank	Reasons given by farmers	Number	% of farmers
1	Lack of rainfall	476	98.3
2	Lack of fertiliser	256	52.9
3	Lack of tools or technology	238	49.2
4	Crop pests	181	37.4
5	Natural disasters	88	18.2
6	Animals/birds destroyed crops	55	11.4
7	Poor soils	25	5.2
8	Lack of agricultural training	16	3.3

Source: Household survey data (n=484) (farming and agro-pastoralists households only).

6 Internally displaced persons

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) defines 'internally displaced persons' as:

> Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border.

The most common cause of displacement in Somali Region is drought, which caused widespread destitution of pastoralists in 1999 and 2004, followed by conflict or insecurity – political struggles, clan conflicts and border disputes. In 2003, several thousand Somalis were deported from Djibouti, and many came to Ethiopia. According to UNOCHA, 69,095 (79 per cent) of the 87,995 IDPs in Somali Region in May 2004 were 'drought induced', and 18,900 (21 per cent) were 'conflict induced' (UNOCHA 2004). The failure of the *Gu'* rains in 2004 and the "new IDPs" related to a referendum in communities bordering Oromiya, have created two new waves of internally displaced people whose status is ambiguous – the Ethiopian government does not recognise some of these IDPs.

The vulnerability of IDPs in Somali Region was exacerbated in early 2005, after the government suspended food aid deliveries for several months (for reasons explained below). Together with ongoing problems of inadequate housing, lack of sanitation and poor health conditions, this resulted in critical malnutrition and mortality rates in several IDP camps. This chapter presents qualitative evidence on livelihoods and living conditions among IDPs in Somali Region, drawing mainly on life histories of several IDPs in Hartisheik camp, and interviews conducted with local and regional officials.[28]

Box 6.1 **Abdi Korane's story**

'I am an Ogaden Somali from Degahbur. I have been living here in Hartisheik Camp 1 for five years, since 1999. The main reason I came here is due to drought. The drought killed all my livestock and since I only reared animals, it was a really major crisis. We also got information that there were IDPs staying in Hartisheik and getting assistance. The only option I had was to move to Hartisheik after getting this information. I left my house and most of our belongings behind. We only gathered what we could carry and travelled here with our young children, together with other families from Degahbur. It was not easy.

'We were 14 in number but now we are seven. Since coming to Hartisheik I lost my brother and six of my 11 children. I am left with five children and my wife. My children died due to malnutrition, malaria, cholera, dysentery and tuberculosis, so did other people from other families. There are no health services in the camp. If there were health services the death rate won't be so high. The only treatment you can get is from the pharmacy, that is if you have money.

'Before coming we heard that Hartisheik has good job opportunities, being a business centre. But never believe what you hear. There is no work for me or my wife. We send our children to work, herding livestock, washing clothes and polishing shoes. That's the only source of income we get. We get food aid from the Regional Government, but only two or three times in a year. When the food aid comes, each family gets about 10kg of wheat to feed the whole family, which is not enough for even one month. Children are dying from hunger and diseases, so are the old and the adults.'

Source: Interview, Hartisheik camp (April 2005).

28 All the quotations in Chapter 6 come from interviews conducted with IDPs in Hartisheik camp in April 2005.

Box 6.2 **Feinuz's story**

'I came from Garbo because of the war there. We had many animals before the war, and were living okay. Then, when the war came, like all the men, my husband was involved in the fighting. We women weren't asked about whether they should fight or anything about the war: in Somali culture, women aren't involved with such matters. They simply come and tell us what they have decided and we have to accept it. We don't really agree with it, but we have no choice. The war was between two sub-clans of the same clan. The cause was just simple, even stupid really. Two small boys fought; one boy used an iron bar and injured the other. Immediately the war started and continued for two-and-a-half years.

'With the war, many animals were killed, usually they were killed on purpose by the opposing clan. Most people on both sides lost animals. It was just stupid really. We were all making ourselves and each other poor: brother was killing brother, brother was making brother poor. Some animals were also sold by the men to get money to buy guns and weapons. Women would never think of selling animals, our wealth, to buy guns to fight our brothers. But men think differently when it comes to fighting.

'My husband was killed about six months before I left Garbo. By then, everything was difficult. There was nobody to help me. Before, the community would help you if you lost your husband. But, then, everybody was in a bad situation and there were many widows. So, when some people were leaving, I decided to leave also because I had no animals and no husband – there wasn't anything there for me.'

Source: Interview, Hartisheik camp (April 2005).

6.1 Livelihoods in Hartisheik camp

Hartisheik is located 75km south-east of Jigjiga town, in Kebribayah District of Jigjiga Zone. During the civil war in Somalia, it was the site of the world's largest refugee camp. The refugee camp was closed in late 2004 and UNHCR withdrew from the region. However, two IDP camps remained. As of mid-2005, approximately 5,000 IDPs were living in Camp A and Camp B. Most IDPs in Hartisheik are Somalis, but around 10 per cent are Oromos. Box 6.1 and Box 6.2 present case studies of two residents of Hartisheik, one displaced there by drought and one by conflict.

Hartisheik residents survive mainly by providing various services to the local population. Women work as domestic servants, cleaners, tea-shop waitresses and clothes washers in Hartisheik town. Men sell *khat*, collect firewood and look for daily labour. Child labour is common. Young girls help their mothers with washing clothes; boys work as shepherds, porters or shoe-shine boys. Since the government's recent clampdown on contraband trading, however, the level of economic activity around Hartisheik has declined, and IDPs find it harder now to earn a living.

People from Hartisheik travel to towns like Tog Wachale (a Somaliland border town) or Bosaso (a port in Puntland) in search of work. Many men have abandoned their families. Several mothers admitted resorting to more drastic survival strategies, including raising money by "selling" their children's labour.

> Because of hunger, some mothers have even been selling their children. Even me, I've got three children: two are still small and the third is a 5-year-old girl. I took her to town and sold her for 100 Birr to another woman who took her to look after her goats. She was supposed to give me more money every month, but never did. I saw her once afterwards, and then not again. I don't think I'll see my child again. But at least she has food where she is. Even if I fetched her now, what would I feed her? I can't just watch my child die. It's bad enough thinking how I'm going to feed the other two children. If they were older and able to work, maybe I would have sold them too.

Box 6.3 **Fatima's story**

'First, Hartisheik was a busy trading place. So, when we first got here, many people were able to do some trading and other things to earn money. We weren't sitting and waiting for NGOs to help us like now. We were independent and trying to help ourselves. But the government started to ban what they called the "contraband business" in Hartisheik, so many people left and the town started to get quiet.

'Of course, we are still trying to survive, especially among the women in the camp. Myself, I have three sons and sent them to work for different people to earn money. I used to do washing for people to earn money. My husband did nothing - what can a pastoralist do in a town? Also, men aren't like women: they are too proud to do something small, even if they are starving. A woman will do anything to earn an income. A woman's pride only goes as far as her hungry children.'

Source: Interview, Hartisheik camp (April 2005).

I had an agreement with the people I sold my daughter to. They were supposed to pay me 100 Birr every month. Then they changed the agreement and gave me 50 Birr after three months. Finally they said: 'We have nothing, so take your child'. But because I had nothing, I left her with them. Even if we go back to live as pastoralists again, I think I'll leave her there.

I had five children. I sold my 5-year-old daughter to be someone's housemaid and my 10-year old son to the same family, to be a goat-herd. They were supposed to pay me 100 Birr every month. They gave me the first 200 Birr for both, then didn't pay me again. They live far from here. But even if they were near here, I wouldn't fetch them because I have no food or anything to give them. I would be fetching them to starve with all of us here in the camp.

6.2 Conditions in Hartisheik camp

Life as an IDP in Somali Region has always been difficult, but conditions in Hartisheik are particularly harsh. A study of eight IDP sites across Ethiopia in 2002 found that: 'Conditions at Hartisheik site appear to be the worst. IDPs at Hartisheik are completely destitute and wait for food aid. Starvation is a major concern' (Miz-Hazab Research Centre 2002). A survey in 2001 found that food supplies to IDP camps in Somali Region were irregular and inadequate, sources of water were unsafe, and sanitary facilities were non-existent, as was access to education. None of these factors has improved since 2001. Health services are limited to a single clinic run by a local NGO, and people have to pay for treatment and drugs, which most cannot afford. The combination of chronic hunger, overcrowding, poor housing, unsafe water and lack of sanitation has created a lethal public health environment where the risks of disease and premature death are persistently and unacceptably high. 'My wife and son died. Death is common here'; 'One of my children died aged five, due to lack of food'; 'Three of my children died, and my first husband. My husband died of tuberculosis and my children of malnutrition and diarrhoea'; 'Every day we bury three or four babies and old people. It is a sin that people are living and dying like this'.

Two surveys in Hartisheik IDP camp since 2004 found rates of global acute malnutrition (GAM)[29] that indicate a 'serious situation' (>20 per cent), severe acute malnutrition (SAM) that indicate an 'emergency' (>5 per cent), and under-five mortality rates that indicate an 'emergency out of control' (>4/10,000/day) according to international guidelines (World Food Programme 2000). In November 2003, 502 children in Hartisheik under five years old

29 Global acute malnutrition (GAM) is defined as weight-for-height below 2 'Z-scores' and/or oedema, or less than 80 per cent of the median weight-for-height and/or oedema. Children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) fall below 3 'Z-scores' or 70 per cent of the median weight-for-height.

were measured. A GAM of 28.5 per cent and a SAM rate of 4.4 per cent were recorded. In March 2005, Save the Children UK conducted a nutrition survey in Hartisheik, at the request of the regional DPPB (Save the Children UK 2005). All camp residents aged 6–59 months (855 children) were measured, and retrospective mortality data was collected from all households for the previous three months. Preliminary results found a GAM of 24.2 per cent and a SAM of 5.1 per cent. The under-five mortality rate (U5MR) was 4.7/10,000/day. According to Ethiopia's emergency nutrition assessment guidelines, these figures classify the situation in Hartisheik camp as 'critical'.

6.3 Food aid in Hartisheik camp

In October 2004, IDPs in Hartisheik reported that food aid was delivered by Regional Government (DPPB) or the World Food Programme (WFP) only two or three times a year, and in small quantities – 10kg or 15kg of wheat per household, irrespective of household size, sometimes supplemented with corn soya blend (CSB) and beans. OWDA (the Ogaden Welfare and Development Association) also provided small amounts of food aid during the month of Ramadan – 6kg of porridge, 11kg of sorghum, ¼ cup of oil, and ¼ cup of dates. 'We do receive food aid but very rarely, and it's inadequate. 10kg is not enough for even one week, let alone three or four months.' 'We receive only dry wheat, 10kg one time every three months, which is not enough. They distribute the same amount of food to all families, not according to the family size. This is not fair.' By April 2005, IDPs reported a much more serious situation.

> We haven't received food for five months. We have no idea why it has stopped. All we know is people are dying of hunger in the camp and nobody is coming to tell us when we will receive anything.
>
> Yesterday, we had three burials. There are more deaths these days now that food hasn't been delivered. Before we had one burial a week. There were never as many as this even a few months ago.
>
> Yesterday my baby had a cup of sugar water and a small piece of bread. He's so thin and sick, he can't take anything more. I'm scared because so many babies have died in the last few months.

6.4 Government policy towards the IDP camps

In March 2005 the government issued a directive that food aid trucks could not move to Degahbur, Fiq, Korahe, Gode and Warder zones without an armed escort. This was a response to attacks by rebel groups on over 40 trucks carrying food aid during the past year, when some food was taken as a "tax" or all the food was looted by the rebels. A further argument for the need for military escorts were reports of food aid "diversion" (selling and misuse) either during transportation or at the warehouses. Whatever the merits of these arguments, the result has been that food had not been delivered throughout the region, including the IDP camp in Hartisheik. A senior DPPB official in Jigjiga reported in early April:

> There is a consignment of food sitting in Dire Dawa, although we know the beneficiaries are waiting. The transporters and trucks are ready and have been waiting for 7 days to get the necessary military authorisation and escort. Another convoy which went without a military escort has been stopped in Harar. DPPB has resolved to write a letter to the Regional government stating that food is now critical and that any deaths that might result will not be our fault, but that of the Regional government. The policy should be that where the military are ready to escort, we'll welcome them, but if they cause delays, we need to go without them.

Key actors in food aid distribution provided other possible contributory explanations for the current delay in food delivery. First, the government's new Safety Net Programme in the region will affect the way in which beneficiaries are categorised and food is distributed.

Second, the IDPs' repatriation and/or their length of stay in Hartisheik might also be affecting decisions regarding food aid. For instance, a DPPB official reported that it was now government policy that if IDPs were in a camp for four years or more, they would no longer be eligible for food aid as IDPs, but should be 'integrated' and included with the rest of the resident population. Third, poor communication between the DPPB and the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) is exacerbated by the asymmetrical power relationship between the DPPB, DPPC, the regional government and the federal government. Fourth, there is always a tension between humanitarian and political priorities and considerations in the region.

Whatever, the combination and validity of factors and actors that explain the current situation, in early April 2005, IDPs were clearly confused and angry about the non-delivery of food aid to the camp. But they did display an astute understanding of the actors involved.

> We send people all the time to the Administration offices, but get no help from them. I think they are the administration for the people of Hartisheik, and not for us in the camp.
>
> The government is telling the NGOs we don't want to go back. Two things make them want to keep us here. First, they steal half of the food that we get from the NGOs. As long as we're here, they will have this food. The second thing is that our children have become their servants, doing all their dirty work for them. So, that's another reason that they don't want us to leave here.
>
> The government distributes food received from WFP. We don't know why we haven't got food now. We've been going to the government offices in Hartisheik asking, but they give us no answers. So, I can't tell you where the problem is: it can be with WFP, or DPPB or the government sitting in Jigjiga or even Addis.
>
> Every day we go to the Administration office to ask about our food, but they don't even want to speak to us anymore. They just send us home and tell us to go and wait for the result. We are asking you to tell the government that: we need to be recognised as real refugees; or they must give us transport to go back.

Their representation of the local Administration officers was borne out by the remarks of one of the senior officers, who said in early April:

> The IDPs are highly problematic to work with: they are always fighting (e.g. when we are trying to deliver food and water). They just want to continue receiving food here in the camp. The only way to get them to go is to stop feeding them in the camp, move them to their homes and give them something once they are there. Otherwise, they'll simply stay here forever.

However, he did confirm that food had not been delivered for the previous four months. He said that they (i.e. the local administration) had written to the DPPB about it, and that the Mayor of Hartisheik was also 'looking into it'.

6.5 The way forward?

There are a number of contested perspectives regarding the future of IDPs when they leave the camp. Emphasising the difficulties associated with a future in pastoralism, women articulated a desire for alternative livelihoods, particularly for their children.

> We have all seen on television how people live: in houses with water in taps and enough food to buy in the shops. We want to live like that instead of the hard life we lead. If we had a choice, of course we want that life for our children also. We are tired of the hard life of pastoralism. Now our children also know about these alternatives, like living in

> cities and being educated. When they see that, of course they prefer that easier life. They aren't interested in being pastoralists any more. Honestly, if they had a choice and we had a choice, we would educate them all and forget about animals. I think many men even agree with this. They and their fathers before them have been pastoralists but they know that things are worse than ever before and will not get better.
>
> I don't want my children to be pastoralists. It isn't a life anymore. The situation has changed too much. You can be rich one year with many animals, and then you suffer two or three harsh droughts, and everything is gone. Because the droughts are so severe these days, it isn't possible ever to recover your losses.
>
> I think that men like having livestock and think that is what a Somali man is supposed to do. They believe that is what makes a Somali man a man: without animals, they don't feel like Somali men. But the young boys are changing now. They don't want to be pastoralists. Even before the last drought, we were starting to hear boys and young men saying they want to go to the towns and earn money and don't want anything to do with animals.
>
> Somali like their cattle, but we Somali women know that it's not possible anymore to make a living like that. Men know this, but many are too proud to admit it. But if you enter the camp now, you will find many men who are even admitting that if they found an alternative, they would leave pastoralism.

Men generally expressed a preference for returning to pastoralism after they leave the camp. On the other hand, they also often acknowledged the difficulties.

> We would like to continue having animals, but it is very difficult. There are too many animals, too many people, too many bad droughts, too little grazing. We are Somalis, we are pastoralists. But the weather is changing and it's not possible to carry on anymore.
>
> We are Somalis and only know pastoralism. But we don't think that we can survive on it anymore. I don't think our sons are going to be able to do it. So, it's better if we send our sons and daughters to school.
>
> My future plan is to go back to my original homeland, despite the problems we faced there. Living in this camp has made life impossible. No jobs, no food, no health services, no education. Going back home is 100 per cent better than staying here. If we could get support from NGOs like first helping us either by restocking us with a few livestock or helping us with farming equipment. In that way we would work and support our families. We would also send our children to school if they could provide free education.

However, in the short term, women and men share the desire to be repatriated to their areas of origin:

> Even if we get transport tonight, we'll go immediately – even without food or animals. We don't have a life here.
>
> Even if we get transport and no restocking, we would go today. We are tired of sitting here and starving and dying of illness. We are totally dependent on their food. When it doesn't come, we die. It's as simple as that.
>
> We all want to go back as soon as possible. I don't think so many of us would have been dying if we were in our own areas. There would have been others to help. Here, everyone hasn't received food for four months, so there isn't anyone to turn to for help. We just have to stand by and watch our children die.

7 Incomes and inequality

This chapter presents several types of data, mostly from our household questionnaire survey, that provide estimates or proxies of income and inequality in Somali Region. Part 7.1 summarises and compares average cash earnings from over 60 income-earning activities pursued by 1,100 households surveyed, while part 7.2 comments on income inequality between households. Part 7.3 identifies the most lucrative and least lucrative livelihood activities, ranks the most common activities and finds that the most "popular" livelihood activities are clustered among the low-return activities. It also discusses some secondary livelihoods not discussed elsewhere in this report – gathering and selling natural products (firewood, charcoal), craftwork (mat-makers) and artisans (shoe-repairers, tailors). Part 7.4 introduces a different indicator of well-being or poverty – food consumption – and calculates 'dietary diversity scores'. Another proxy indicator – purchases of clothes and basic grocery items – is explored in Part 7.5. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the main problems that respondents reported in making a living, and finds strong evidence of occupational immobility among the households surveyed.

7.1 Household incomes

The household survey questionnaire asked respondents to report on all livelihood activities in which they had engaged during the past year,[30] and to estimate the average income earned doing each activity.[31] Table 7.1 summarises monthly cash incomes earned by sampled households, by district and livelihood category, both for households reporting positive income and for those who recorded no cash income at all. Approximately one in five households interviewed (n=227/1,098 =20.7 per cent) reported undertaking no income-generating activities in the 12 months preceding the survey, and a further 119 households (10.8 per cent) could not (or would not) estimate the income they earned from the activities they do undertake.[32] Most households recording zero income are agro-pastoralists (n=95/227 =42 per cent) or farmers (n=79/227 =35 per cent). Only four urban households (2 per cent) reported zero income, reflecting the higher degree of monetisation of urban livelihoods.

Many incomes in rural communities were reported in Somali Shillings or Somaliland Shillings (including most incomes in pastoralist Gashamo), reflecting the fact that rural livelihoods in Somali Region are highly integrated with the economy of neighbouring Somalia and Somaliland.[33] Conversely, almost all urban respondents reported their incomes in Birr, reflecting the fact that urban residents tend to be more closely connected with the mainstream Ethiopian economy.

Table 7.1 reveals that average household incomes in urban centres of Somali Region are, not unexpectedly, substantially higher than in rural areas. On the other hand, costs of living are

30 A list of over 60 different livelihood activities was read out to each respondent, who stated whether (or not) at least one member of his or her household had been engaged in that activity during the past year. The list of activities was compiled in training and during pilot testing of the questionnaire.

31 Incomes are notoriously difficult to estimate through direct questions in a household survey, and for this reason household income is usually proxied by consumption or expenditure data. Our purpose in this survey was to understand household livelihood portfolios and to assess relative returns to different livelihood activities. The income statistics reported here should therefore be regarded as indicative and relative. They almost certainly underestimate total income, as they exclude the value of remittances and other transfers. They should not be taken as measurements of absolute income from which poverty headcounts could be derived.

32 Households reporting no livelihood activities could be surviving on a range of alternative sources of food and income that are not recorded in this table, including food crop farming and livestock rearing (consuming own crops and animal products), barter exchange, illicit livelihood activities (e.g. contraband trade), remittances, food aid and other transfers.

33 These incomes were converted into Ethiopian Birr at the exchange rates prevailing at the time of the survey: 1 Birr = 1,500 Somali Shillings; 1 Birr = 685 Somaliland Shillings.

Table 7.1 **Average household cash income, by district (Birr per month)**

District	*Excluding zero income households* Mean income	(Standard deviation)	Gini coefficient	*Including zero income households** Mean income	(Standard deviation)	Gini coefficient
Pastoralist	**340**	**(471)**	**0.56**	**217**	**(410)**	**0.72**
Gashamo	516	(811)	0.65	196	(556)	0.87
Shinile	159	(100)	0.34	132	(109)	0.45
Shilabo	460	(419)	0.47	319	(408)	0.63
Agro-pastoral	**199**	**(217)**	**0.52**	**97**	**(181)**	**0.77**
Kebribayah	230	(228)	0.48	97	(186)	0.78
Doboweyn	238	(263)	0.53	121	(222)	0.76
Cherati	137	(133)	0.51	73	(118)	0.74
Farmer	**345**	**(460)**	**0.56**	**254**	**(423)**	**0.67**
Jigjiga rural	337	(332)	0.44	253	(322)	0.58
Kelafo	431	(640)	0.63	303	(571)	0.74
Dolo Odo	272	(346)	0.55	206	(323)	0.66
Urban	**1,103**	**(2,263)**	**0.52**	**1,081**	**(2,245)**	**0.53**
Jigjiga town	1,225	(3,120)	0.63	1,225	(3,121)	0.63
Gode	979	(656)	0.35	940	(671)	0.38
Total	**511**	**(1,252)**	**0.61**	**351**	**(1,064)**	**0.74**
By household head						
Male head	517	(1,288)	0.62	354	(1,093)	0.74
Female head	424	(449)	0.52	297	(423)	0.66

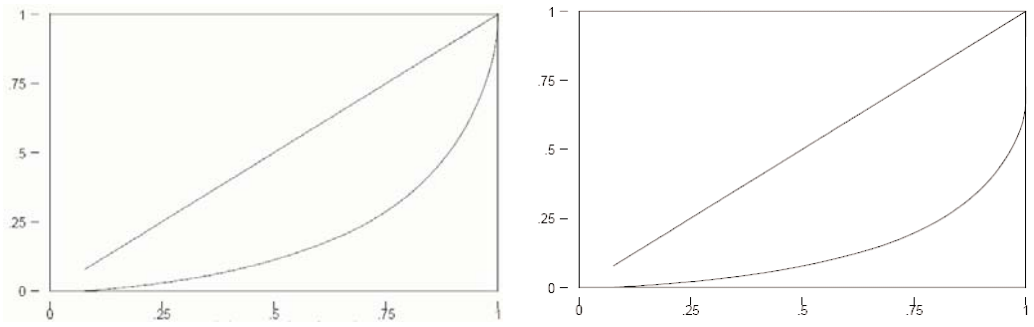
* 346 households reported zero cash income from any source (n=752).
Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

higher in urban areas – for rental, electricity, transport, food that must be purchased (rather than produced or farmed or consumed from livestock) and other expenses that are lower or negligible for rural residents – so in real terms the difference is less than the figures suggest. Nonetheless, living standards are generally higher in towns, and livelihood vulnerability is lower.

Cash incomes in Jigjiga town, for example, are fully 17 times higher than in Cherati and 12 times higher than in Kebribayah. Both of these are agro-pastoral districts, and the three agro-pastoralist communities surveyed occupy the lowest positions in a ranking of cash incomes by district (for all households, including those with zero reported income). Interestingly, farmers are, on average, the wealthiest rural households in our survey,[34] although the wealthiest rural district is Shilabo, a pastoralist area. Excluding zero-income households, Gashamo has the highest average income, which suggests that but for the effects of the 2004 drought, pastoralist-based livelihoods may be the most lucrative way of making a living in rural Somali Region – but also the most vulnerable.

34 It must be reiterated that only cash income is considered in this analysis. This includes income earned from crop sales, but it does not include the imputed value of domestically consumed agricultural production. While this information is available for crop producers from the household survey, comparable data on milk and meat consumption – an equally important source of food consumption among livestock producers – is not.

Figure 7.1 **Lorenz curves of household incomes, Somali Region**[36]



(Excluding income=0) (Including income=0)

7.2 Income inequality

Inequality between male- and female-headed households is in the predictable direction. Table 7.1 reveals that households headed by men are 20 per cent wealthier than households headed by women. If anything, the extent of inequality is rather less than expected. One factor explaining this is that female-headed households are disproportionately resident in towns rather than in rural areas, where many of these women are wealthy independent traders. Within rural communities, the income differential between male- and female-headed households is considerably wider. On the other hand, the fact that female-headed households have average incomes that are higher than average incomes in most rural districts suggests that there is no basis for classifying households headed by women as a "vulnerable group" requiring targeted safety net interventions.

Table 7.1 also presents Gini coefficients for household cash incomes, by district and livelihood system.[35] Even excluding zero-income households, inequality in terms of cash income earned is rather high (Gini=0.61). Across the full sample, including those with zero income, inequality is extremely high (Gini=0.74). Figure 7.1 plots the distribution of household incomes in the form of Lorenz curves, which illustrates how unequally distributed cash incomes are, especially across the full sample. Interestingly, income inequality is substantially lower in urban areas (Gini=0.53), where incomes are higher, than in rural areas, where average incomes are lower but the range of incomes is wider. It is intriguing that the highest Gini coefficient (0.87) of all is registered for Gashamo District. Although a sample size of 100 is too small to draw meaningful conclusions for a large and complex district, this could reflect the polarising effects of the recent drought.

7.3 Returns to livelihood activities

Many of the most lucrative sources of income are preferentially or exclusively accessible to urban residents, such as most categories of salaried employment, construction work or carpentry, and renting out property. Conversely, many livelihood activities that are exclusively rural, in that they derive from natural products not found in towns, generate very low returns. These include selling firewood, wild fruit and charcoal, making baskets and mats, and beekeeping (Table 7.2).

Table 7.3 ranks the 20 most common livelihood activities pursued by the 1,100 households in our survey. It is striking how many of these activities are derived directly from the natural resource base: 11 of the 20 are agricultural activities (farming or livestock-based), and a further three involve gathering and selling natural products (firewood, charcoal, building materials).

35 The Gini coefficient is a measure of income or wealth inequality between households in a given population, where complete equality is signified by a Gini value of 0, and complete inequality (all income or assets accrue to a single household) by a Gini value of 1.

36 The x-axis in these diagrams shows the cumulative proportion of the sample population; the y-axis shows the cumulative proportion of total income earned. The flatter the curve, the more equal is the distribution of income across households.

Table 7.2 **Average income by livelihood category, and by highest and lowest returns**

Income category	Birr/month	Most lucrative activities	Birr/month
Trading	615	1. Contraband trader	1,607
Rents	502	2. Construction worker	1,307
Employment or labour	447	3. Carpenter or metal-worker	873
Services	300	4. *Khat* trader	868
Food & drink processing	244	5. Selling meat (from own livestock)	853
Livestock production	216	**Least lucrative activities**	
Crop farming	210	60. Charcoal seller	100
Crafts & small industry	182	61. Firewood collector	88
Begging	123	62. Basket-maker or mat-maker	88
Sale of natural products	117	63. Selling eggs (from own chickens)	79
Average income by activity	**397**	64. Beekeeper (selling honey or wax)	77

Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

Of the remaining six, craftwork (making baskets or mats) and livestock trading also rely directly on natural resources. Only services (religious teachers, traditional healers, tea-stalls) and employment (salaried job, daily labourer) are largely independent of the physical environment, though of course the demand for services depends on the incomes of local households, and some casual labour is agricultural or livestock herding. Table 7.3 therefore reveals a principal source of livelihood vulnerability in rural Somali Region, namely, that a dangerously high proportion of household income derives from an environmental base that is limited and fragile, and varies according to unpredictable fluctuations in the weather.[37]

Table 7.3 **Most prevalent livelihood activities in Somali Region**

	Livelihood activity	Total households	Total (%)	Average income (Birr)
1	*Livestock:* rearing animals (camels, cattle, shoats)	763	69.9	258
2	*Farming:* cereal crops (sorghum, maize, wheat)	474	43.4	142
3	*Natural products:* firewood	186	17.0	88
4	*Natural products:* charcoal	160	14.7	100
5	*Livestock:* dairy products (milk, butter, *ghee*, cheese)	89	8.2	125
6	*Craftwork:* basket-making, mat-making	69	6.3	88
7	*Farming:* pulses (beans, cow-pea, chick-pea)	63	5.8	103
8	*Services:* selling tea, coffee, cake, bread	63	5.8	199
9	*Farming:* oil crops (sesame, sunflower)	50	4.6	176
10	*Trading:* livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, camels)	41	3.8	562
11	*Farming:* vegetables (onion, tomato, pumpkin)	41	3.8	397
12	*Natural products:* construction materials (grass, poles)	36	3.3	166
13	*Employment:* salaried job	35	3.2	584
14	*Services:* religious teacher (Koranic)	34	3.1	231
15	*Services:* traditional healer	26	2.4	360
16	*Employment:* daily labourer	26	2.4	233
17	*Farming:* root crops (Irish potato, sweet potato)	26	2.4	141
18	*Farming:* fruits (mango, papaya, banana, orange)	26	2.4	282
19	*Farming: khat*	25	2.3	586
20	*Livestock:* rearing chickens (selling eggs)	25	2.3	79

Source: Household survey data (n=1,095).

37 As Sen (1981) demonstrated, when agricultural incomes collapse so does the demand for informal services in affected communities, so rural service providers are equally vulnerable to natural disasters, through a process that Sen characterised as 'derived destitution'.

Box 7.1 **Case study: charcoal sellers**

Retailer: 'I have been involved in the charcoal business for the past three years, because most of our animals perished because of the droughts. I buy charcoal directly from the men in the bush who prepare the charcoal. Then I sell it in small bags to passing traffic on the road. We buy it for 7 Birr and sell it for 10 Birr. If the market is good and active, I can sell 30 bags in a month, but when the market is bad, I only sell 10 to 15 bags. Different things affect the traffic: if people have money, they travel more, so there is more passing traffic. In the drought, people don't have money to travel, so I sell less charcoal. More women are selling charcoal now, since they face similar circumstances.'

Wholesaler: Khadija started in the charcoal business in 1997. She buys charcoal in bulk from the trucks that transport charcoal from the Degahbur area to Jigjiga market. The purchase price from the producer is 10 Birr per sack, and she resells each sack at 25 Birr. Transport costs are 6 Birr per sack and she pays tax in Kebribayah (100 Birr per truck) and Jigjiga (150 Birr per truck). 'When the trade is good, we bring in seven big trucks every month.' Sometimes the charcoal is treated as contraband – vehicles are impounded by the authorities and the charcoal is confiscated. 'During these periods, we use camels to transport our charcoal into the city.' Transport by camel is more expensive, at 20 Birr per sack, and it is slower. Profits for traders declines, as volumes are affected.

Source: Life history interviews with traders.

It is also significant that none of the five 'most lucrative' livelihood activities listed in Table 7.2 appear in this list of the 20 'most popular' livelihood activities in our survey. Conversely, four of the five 'least lucrative' activities (all except beekeeping) do appear on this list. Clearly, there are entry barriers to the most attractive occupations in Somali Region – such as working capital constraints, skills requirements or educational qualifications – that exclude the majority of local people from pursuing these activities. Instead, they are mostly confined to pastoralism, farming, gathering natural products and craftwork. Since pastoralism and crop farming have been discussed elsewhere in this report, below we discuss some of the other most common livelihood activities.

7.3.1 Gathering and selling natural products

Gathering and selling natural products – firewood, charcoal, poles and grass for housing, fodder, wild fruits and incense where these are available – is an important source of secondary income for many residents of rural Somali Region. Selling charcoal and firewood are, in fact, the most common livelihood activities recorded in rural communities, after livestock rearing and crop farming (Table 7.3). However, these ways of generating income should not be seen as chosen or preferred, but instead as "last resort" options adopted by people who are poor and desperate for any income at all. The work is arduous and time-consuming, and the returns are tiny. Very often, these activities are adopted after normal sources of income have failed; many people told us they resorted to selling firewood only after drought had brought them close to destitution.

> I started selling charcoal because of the drought. It is an activity that poor people do, because you have to go some distance to find and buy charcoal. The income is very small.
>
> It wasn't like this before. There weren't so many droughts. Before the last two droughts, everyone owned animals and was basically self-sufficient. Since then, women first started selling firewood and charcoal for the first time.[38]

38 Two women in rural Gashamo.

Box 7.2 **Case study: building materials trader**

Amina, a 26-year-old woman from an agro-pastoralist family in Borale village, started selling *khat* after she was divorced. During the rains, however, *khat* grows rapidly, there is over-supply and the market collapses, so Amina changed her business to selling building materials instead. She buys from local suppliers in Borale, where there is an abundance of good quality wood, and sells in Jigjiga market. At first she suffered heavy losses, but now she has built relationships with certain suppliers, and has established herself in the market despite being a woman with no relatives to help her get started. 'But it is difficult, because competition between the traders in Jigjiga is fierce.'

The building materials trade is wholly within the Somali Region, so is not affected by border closures or the erratic access to the Arab markets. The main problem the traders face is taxation. 'In Gorey, 20 Birr tax is charged per trip. In Dagahle, 150 Birr is charged per trip. At Karamarda, 70 Birr is charged per trip. Finally at the Jigjiga market centre, 10 Birr is charged per month. This multiple taxation is a burden!'

Amina is still one of the few women involved in trading building materials in Somali Region. 'As a woman, it is better than farming or rearing livestock, because you make your own profits or losses depending on your hard work and skills. In business, it doesn't matter very much if you male or female; everybody is in it for their profits, and everybody is competing against each other. There are none of those stiff traditions that exclude women, unlike in pastoralism and politics.'

Source: Case study interviews with traders.

Charcoal burning is often criticised as causing environmental damage, and some attempts have been made to regulate it, but these regulations are weakly enforced. Local people themselves recognise this problem, but argue that those who burn charcoal are forced into this by poverty. Recently, commercial charcoal associations have been formed that are exporting large quantities of charcoal to Somaliland. This commercialisation of a "traditional" informal livelihood activity is increasing the incentives to over-exploit the natural resource base, and according to some people is even undermining Somali culture. One key informant interviewed in Harshin elaborated on the negative interactions between drought, charcoal burning and *khat* consumption:

> Before the 2004 drought, charcoaling was happening on a very limited scale. But as people's livelihood of pastoralism is being threatened by the droughts, they are being forced to rely more and more on charcoal burning and selling. The land is being turned into a desert right before our very eyes, because the community is burning too many trees for charcoal. In Harshin, there is a large-scale export charcoal business – charcoal is exported to Somaliland and elsewhere. If they were only producing charcoal for themselves and our community here, it wouldn't be so serious. Pastoralists in the bush are working for the big charcoal associations. They are paid to fence the land in the bush, prepare the charcoal and sell it to the association in town. They have a connection to Somaliland.
>
> Before the drought, it was only very, very poor people who were involved in charcoaling. Now, it's a big business involving people that weren't that poor: we even have some people exporting to the Gulf. There is a fine of 100 Birr for cutting trees. But people don't listen. I'm surprised they don't listen to us – according to Somali culture and tradition, people are supposed to listen to their elders and leaders. It seems the culture is changing. People are more concerned with making money than anything else. Before, men were not chewing as much *khat* as now. Now, even young boys are chewing *khat*. It shows that something is seriously wrong in our community. The Association is also enticing young boys to burn charcoal and gives them money or *khat* as payment.[39]

39 Key informant, Harshin.

Box 7.3 **Case study: mat-maker**

Dherey is a 39-year-old woman who was born and still lives in Ukta, in Dolo Odo. Dherey is married to Suleiman, and they have ten children. Ukta is a close-knit community – most people are Bantu, from the same sub-clan. Dherey's family farms maize along the river. They generally harvest only three–four bags of maize, which is not enough to feed all 12 of them. To supplement their crop production, Dherey collects grass and makes mats that she sells in Dolo town, about 16 km away, while Suleiman collects firewood and construction materials (grass and wooden poles for house-building) and sells these in Dolo town. The couple earns about 30 Birr each week from these activities, most of which they spend on buying food for the family, as well as sugar, tea and other essentials.

All mat-making in the village is done by women, though children and some men help with collecting the materials. One problem associated with mat-making is market fluctuations – sometimes Dherey returns from Dolo having sold no mats at all. Another problem is the distance involved in travelling to the market, which is daunting – and expensive. She rents a donkey to transport her mats to Dolo market, paying the donkey owner 6 Birr per trip. 'If I could afford a donkey, the cost would be less and I would make more profit.' Nonetheless, Dherey is also teaching her daughters how to make mats, so that they can earn an independent income for themselves when they grow up.

Source: Qualitative survey interview, Dolo Odo District.

Firewood for cooking is a significant expense in most rural Somali households. One bundle of firewood (called a *hidmo*) generally costs 2 Birr and lasts for 1–1½ days. Firewood is collected from the bush by women and donkey owners, who tend to favour deadwood – dry bush, broken branches and fallen trees – as long as it is available, but also cut green wood when there is no alternative. About eight–ten donkey-loads of firewood are brought into Jigjiga market every day. Each donkey can carry ten bundles of wood. Many women also walk to Jigjiga market carrying firewood for sale; usually four or five bundles each. If they sell everything they earn just 8 or 10 Birr for many hours of physical labour – gathering wood, walking with a heavy load (often several kilometres) to market, sitting at the market all day and walking back home.

Wood is also used as a building material: to reinforce the walls of pastoralists' moveable homes, as rafters to support roofing in permanent structures, and to be made into doors and window-frames. Hardwood suitable as construction materials is collected from certain districts where the appropriate trees either grow abundantly in the wild or are cultivated specifically for this purpose, mainly by agro-pastoralists. Jigjiga market is supplied with hardwood from three districts to the west of Jigjiga town and south of the Jigjiga–Harar road.

Building wood is also sold in bundles like firewood, but sells for twice or three times the price: 5–7 Birr per bundle. Traders rent lorries from Jigjiga town to transport building wood, up to 800 bundles each load. The trip from one supplying district – Borale – takes as long as 36 hours. Traders buy wood from villagers, usually paying 2 Birr per bundle. Loaders are also hired to load and unload the wood; they charge 0.1 Birr per bundle. Traders also have to pay several taxes on the road and in the market itself, which reduces their profit margins (see Box 7.2).

7.3.2 Craft workers and artisans

In parts of rural Somali Region where the raw materials are freely available, craftwork based on natural products is fairly common. This includes making mats and baskets from grasses and reeds, which is practised extensively by communities living alongside rivers like the Shabelle and the Dawa/Ganale (Box 7.3).

Box 7.4 **Case study: shoe-repairer**

Abdi is a 54-year-old man who is married with four children. At the time of being interviewed, he owned 15 camels and 30 shoats. Two of his older sons (aged 21 and 16) look after the livestock. Abdi has been a shoe- repairer since 1981, when he started his one-man business in Somalia. He sees this trade as giving him a reliable source of disposable income to buy essential commodities like wheat, oil, sugar and salt. 'It is difficult to rely only on livestock for sustenance. They are prone to drought and dry seasons and produce minimal milk that is not even enough for household consumption.'

Abdi said that most Somalis look down upon him, as they consider shoe-repairing to be a "slave job" that is only for people with limited means. 'I am the only one doing this work in this place. Somalis are pastoralists by nature and they tend to patronise anyone who is outside it.' However, Abdi claims that he is better off than most pastoralists, as he makes on average about 25 Birr per day, enough to meet his household's needs and also make some savings. His business is connected with pastoralists as most of his clients are pastoralists. He gets his tools – nails, polish and glue – from Bosaso in Somalia, by placing orders with traders who travel back and forth to Somalia.

Abdi does not intend to pass on his skills to his children as he claims that they, like other Somalis, look down on shoe-repairing and despise it as a "backward" occupation.

Source: Qualitative survey interview, Shilabo District.

Some people living in rural communities have artisanal skills such as shoe-repairing or tailoring, though this is uncommon. In one case of a shoe-repairer from Shilabo (Box 7.4), he had acquired his skills and experience working as a young man in a town in Somalia, which he brought with him to Ethiopia. Although Abdi sees his work as providing a supplementary source of income to compensate for the unreliability of livestock, his clients are mostly pastoralists, which means this occupation is vulnerable to 'derived destitution' (Sen 1981) – the possibility that demand for his services will collapse following a shock to pastoralist livelihoods.

Some artisans are generally rural-based, such as potters, weavers or blacksmiths. Often these specialised skills are passed on from father to son, or mother to daughter. In Ethiopia these groups often belong to minority castes, and are socially excluded within their villages. Other artisans such as tailors are more usually based in towns, where the demand for their services is higher and more reliable. Even in urban areas, however, artisans are "despised", and one tailor interviewed in Gode town plans to educate his children in the hope that they find alternative employment in adult life (Box 7.5).

7.4 Food consumption

Contradicting the image of pastoralists as surviving mainly on meat, milk and blood, the analysis of food consumption in Somali Region reveals a great deal of dietary diversity across districts and livelihood groups, and a high dependence on cereals as well as on animal products. Table 7.4 shows that pastoralist diets are dominated by milk and meat, but also by maize and wheat. Farmers also consume milk but have less access to meat, though riverine farmers eat some fish, and their staple cereals are maize and sorghum. Farmers have better access to vegetables and beans than do agro-pastoralists and pastoralists.

Agro-pastoralists in this survey consume maize, wheat and/or sorghum almost equally. Most consume milk and about half eat meat, but otherwise they have a very undiversified diet. Urban diets are the most diversified – more than half the urban residents surveyed regularly consume rice, pasta, wheat and bread, most also consume milk and meat, and more than two-thirds of urban households eat vegetables.

The number of different food items consumed by a household is a simple but robust indicator of food security. It reflects the level of dietary diversity and therefore the quality of people's diets. A diverse diet is also associated with higher food consumption: 'a 1 percent

Box 7.5 **Case study: tailor, Gode town**

Ahmed is a 30-year-old tailor who has lived his whole life in Gode town. He married in September 2003 and the couple has two young children: a son and a daughter, both under two years old. Since his father's death his widowed mother is also living with them. Tailoring is his only job. Although his father was a farmer, Ahmed is a tailor, having started his one-man tailoring business in 2000. Most of his customers are women and children. He makes between 15 and 20 Birr a day from making and repairing clothes. He rents the sewing machine he uses from a friend, for a rental of 4 Birr a day. Ahmed's wife is not engaged in any business apart from looking after the children. Although they are on the food aid register, they receive very little food (4 kg of wheat per person) and only very occasionally – once or twice a year.

Due to their limited means, Ahmed does not take his children to hospital when they are ill, instead relying on what he calls 'God's mercy' to heal them. If all goes well for them, he plans for his children to go to school and continue up to university so that they may improve themselves and support their parents. But he also intends teach them basic tailoring skills, in case they cannot make it in school or other trades. He values education highly, as he has seen a number of people whom he knew who are in good jobs and earning good money. Ahmed says that Somalis hold negative attitudes towards tailors, as this is considered as a profession only for the poor – "people with small means".

Source: Qualitative survey interview, Gode town.

increase in dietary diversity is associated with a 1 percent increase in per capita consumption. … the magnitude of the association between dietary diversity and caloric availability at the household level increases with the mean level of caloric availability' (Hoddinott and Yohannes 2002: iii). A recent categorisation of dietary diversity identified three distinct groups of households, based on their food consumption patterns (WFP 2005: 28):

- ***Low dietary diversity:*** these households consume less than four food items per day belonging to one or two food groups, i.e. cereals and fat.
- ***Borderline dietary diversity:*** these households consume five to six food items per day belonging to only three food groups, i.e. cereals, fat and vegetable proteins.
- ***High dietary diversity:*** these households consume more than six food items per day belonging to several food groups, i.e. cereals, fat, vegetable proteins, tubers, vegetables, fruits and animal proteins.

These patterns of food consumption were found to be well correlated with other indicators of food insecurity, including meals per day, average "food gap" or "food surplus" (the distance between actual consumption and a "minimum food consumption threshold"), and experiences of hunger. Applying the same cut-off thresholds to our survey households, agro-pastoralists have the most inadequate diets in terms of diversity. Farmers' diets also score in the "low diversity" range, but are slightly more diversified than agro-pastoralist diets. Pastoralist diets are "borderline" in terms of dietary diversity. Only urban households have adequate diets characterised by high diversity.

These findings provide some confirmation of the data on relative cash incomes provided earlier in this chapter. Urban households are wealthier on all indicators than rural households in Somali Region, and they enjoy more diversified and healthier diets, consuming more vegetables and fruit even than the farmers who produce these crops. Agro-pastoralists are the poorest households in our survey, and have the most limited diets. Farmers have more restricted diets than pastoralists, despite earning marginally more cash income, on average (Table 7.1). Two explanations can be offered for this apparent anomaly. One is to point out that average pastoralist incomes are pulled down by Shinile, an atypical part of Somali Region and one of the poorest districts in our survey. (Average incomes in

Table 7.4 **Consumption of different food types, by livelihood category***

Food type	Pastoralist	Agro-pastoralist	Farmer	Urban	Total
Staple cereals					
Maize	72%	61%	90%	48%	70.4%
Wheat	61%	61%	39%	79%	57.2%
Sorghum	49%	58%	64%	14%	50.7%
Rice	32%	7%	10%	85%	26.1%
Pasta	18%	1%	4%	73%	17.0%
Bread	9%	1%	2%	54%	10.9%
Barley	0%	1%	4%	3%	1.6%
Meat, fish and dairy					
Milk	93%	91%	83%	85%	88.3%
Meat	76%	55%	46%	72%	60.9%
Eggs	6%	0%	11%	16%	7.0%
Fish	1%	0%	16%	7%	5.8%
Vegetables and fruit					
Beans	8%	9%	15%	43%	15.2%
Vegetables	8%	1%	8%	70%	14.9%
Fruit	2%	0%	2%	34%	6.1%
Dietary diversity score	**4.3**	**3.4**	**3.9**	**6.8**	**4.3**

* This question was not asked in the first phase of the fieldwork, so no data are available for Gashamo, Kebribayah and urban Jigjiga.
Source: Household survey data (n=789).

Gashamo and Shilabo are higher than in any farming district surveyed.) The second point is that pastoralists are more market-dependent than farmers for their food needs, so they tend to purchase a wider range of local and imported food items than do farmers, who are more dependent on their own food production.

7.5 Household purchases

Another good proxy indicator of well-being is household purchases of basic items such as clothes and groceries. Our questionnaire survey asked respondents how many times clothes have been purchased within the last three years by the household, for both adults and children. (Both new and second-hand clothes purchases were recorded; the pattern of responses is almost identical.) Clustering households by livelihood activity, urban households purchase new clothes twice as frequently as rural households (Table 7.5). Farmers buy new (and second-hand) clothes slightly more often than pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, who again emerge as the "poorest" category by this single indicator. Among rural districts, farmers in the Jigjiga plains purchase clothes most frequently. This could reflect their close proximity to the large clothing markets in Jigjiga town, as access to markets is an important determinant of consumer behaviour, not just levels of income.

Survey respondents were also asked if four common grocery items – salt, sugar, tea-leaves and kerosene – were present in the home on the day of the interview. These items were identified in pilot testing as "basic essentials" for Somali households. A familiar pattern is found as with other proxy indicators of poverty. Urban households are most likely to have some or all of these items in their homes – three-quarters of our urban households had all four items present when they were interviewed (Table 7.6). Agro-pastoralist households are least likely to have these items at home – just one in 10 had sugar and one in 25 had kerosene when they were interviewed. As with other indicators of well-being discussed in this chapter, there is no significant difference between farmers and pastoralists.

Table 7.5 **Purchases of new clothes, by livelihood category**

	Clothes for adults (% households)						*Clothes for children (% households)*					
Livelihood	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4+**	**Mean**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4+**	**Mean**
Pastoral	35	24	36	4	1	1.1	33	18	32	15	2	1.4
Agro-pastoral	29	49	20	1	0	0.9	26	43	27	2	0	1.1
Farmer	16	43	37	3	0	1.3	18	30	38	13	1	1.5
Urban	8	6	34	44	8	2.4	9	2	29	46	14	2.7
Average	**23%**	**34%**	**31%**	**9%**	**2%**	**1.3**	**22%**	**25%**	**32%**	**17%**	**3%**	**1.6**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,094).

Once again, it is agro-pastoralist households who emerge as the worst-off group in our survey. As one woman from Kebribayah told us: 'I am so poor these days that I can only afford black tea; if I had extra money, I would have milk in my tea!'[40] This is an important finding, given the popular view that livelihood diversification is a rational response to risk, and that spreading risk among multiple occupations reduces income fluctuations and offers more stable income and consumption over time. This does not appear to be borne out by our survey data for Somali Region. Even during a drought that affected pastoralists most severely, pastoralists and farmers are better-off on every indicator reported here. Paradoxically, it seems that agro-pastoralism, by combining crop farming with livestock rearing, results in the worst of both worlds.

7.6 Livelihood problems and changes

Households interviewed in our survey reported very different livelihood problems, depending on their location and the livelihood strategy they are pursuing. Among pastoralists, the drought in Gashamo clearly affected the ranking of problems reported. Food shortages ranked much lower in Shinile and Shilabo than in Gashamo, for instance. In Shilabo, which has been badly affected by economic shocks and conflict in recent years, lack of democracy ranked second, but was not mentioned at all in either Gashamo or Shinile. Similarly, shortages of food and water ranked first in Kebribayah, which was also seriously affected by the recent drought in 2004, but ranked much lower in the other agro-pastoralist districts of Cherati and Doboweyn, which are further south and escaped the worst of the drought.

Farmers also saw lack of access to health services as their most pressing problem, followed by lack of access to education. This can be interpreted as reflecting the marginalisation of the ethnic Bantu of Somali Region, who dominate the riverine farming communities of Dolo Odo and Kelafo. After all, one of the government's arguments for "sedentarisation" of pastoralists is that it is easier and more cost-effective to provide settled communities with public services such as schools and clinics, yet farmers in Somali Region who have been settled for decades see little evidence of schools and clinics in their villages.

Table 7.6 **Basic items in the home, by livelihood category (% of households)**

Livelihood system	**Salt**	**Sugar**	**Tea**	**Kerosene**	**Mean**
Pastoralist	27	21	23	16	21.8
Agro-pastoral	20	10	18	4	13.0
Farming	28	15	24	13	22.3
Urban	89	78	82	75	81.0
Average	**36.4**	**26.6**	**32.9**	**22.3**	**26.8**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,095).

40 A woman interviewed in Kebribayah.

Table 7.7 **Livelihood problems ranked, by livelihood category**

Rank	Pastoralists	Agro-pastoralists	Farmers	Urban residents
1	No health centre	No health centre	No health centre	Lack of cash income
2	Shortage of food	Shortage of food	No education/school	Absence of markets
3	No education/school	Lack of water	Shortage of food	Lack of water
4	Lack of water	No education/school	No farm equipment	Inadequate shelter
5	No veterinary service	No farm equipment	Lack of water	Lack of democracy

Across the full sample of 1,100 households, lack of health services was by far the most frequently mentioned complaint, followed by lack of education services. Both of these are the responsibility of government, and restricted access to health and education has serious implications for both current livelihoods and future livelihood potential. Lack of food and water ranked third and fourth, with lack of cash income fifth and other problems – such as lack of veterinary services or farming equipment – being specific to the livelihood context, and no other problems being mentioned consistently across livelihood systems.

Household survey respondents were also asked if they or any member of their household had ever undertaken any livelihood activity in the past that they do not do any more. Only 45 (5.7 per cent) answered in the affirmative, suggesting a great deal of occupational immobility among Ethiopian Somalis, especially in rural areas. The biggest change was recorded in Shilabo District, where 22 out of 100 households had stopped pursuing a range of previous occupations that included working in the private or public sector: running a business, working as a driver, or working for the government. It is likely that this evidence of disrupted employment in Shilabo is related to the recent problems caused by the government's "war on contraband", which, as noted in Chapter 4, has hit Shilabo especially severely.

In no other rural districts had more than six individuals interviewed changed their occupation. In urban Gode, five households had come to town having left (or been forced out of) pastoralism, and a further six individuals in Gode had pursued different livelihood activities in the past. It is not unexpected that people in towns can move between occupations more freely than rural residents. However, the fact that very few individuals in either our rural or urban households had moved out of pastoralism or farming is both a reflection on the limited employment opportunities in rural Somali Region and an indictment of the education system. Lack of formal education leaves rural Somalis with no option but to continue pursuing their parents' livestock- or crop-based livelihoods, no matter how vulnerable that livelihood strategy becomes.

Section 3 Vulnerability

This section addresses the nature and causes of livelihood vulnerability in Somali Region. Chapter 8 quantifies vulnerability in terms of two indicators: a self-assessment of the household's well-being at different points in time, and mortality in these households since 1992. Chapter 9 considers drought and hunger in Somali Region; Chapter 10 explores the nature and impacts of conflict on livelihoods; Chapter 11 turns the attention to issues of governance and political representation; and Chapter 12 looks at the relationship between gender and vulnerability.

8 Livelihood vulnerability and mortality outcomes

This chapter presents household survey data on self-assessed vulnerability and on mortality outcomes.

8.1 Trends in self-assessed vulnerability

Towards the end of the household survey interview, each respondent was asked to provide a self-assessment of their household's situation, both now and at several points in the past, up to ten years ago.[41] Four categorical responses were allowed, corresponding to descriptions of the household as either 'accumulating', 'self-sufficient', 'struggling', or 'destitute'. The results are presented for each district sub-sample in Figure 8.1, where, for simplicity, the two positive responses are combined into a single category – 'doing well' – while the two negative responses are combined into a second category – 'struggling' (which is a mirror image of those 'doing well'). It is striking how each diagram presents a nuanced depiction of livelihood trends in different parts of the region, and can be interpreted in a way that corresponds to our knowledge of major events that impacted on livelihoods in these communities at different times within the past decade.

The first diagram in Figure 8.1 summarises the responses across all 1,100 households interviewed in ten districts. A distinctive but complex pattern emerges. Comparing the situation '10 years ago' with 'today' (reading the diagram from left to right), there has been a dramatic decline in the number of households reporting that they are 'doing well', and a corresponding rise in households that are 'struggling' to survive. The proportion of households 'doing well' has fallen from over 90 per cent in the mid-1990s to about 30 per cent in 2004/5, while 'struggling' households have risen from close to zero to above 70 per cent. This reversal of fortunes has not occurred in a linear trend, however; instead, the diagram provides graphic evidence of the volatility of livelihoods in Somali Region. Around the time of the 1999/2000 drought emergency, there was a dramatic spike in 'struggling' households (almost 80 per cent, even higher than the present day), which was followed by a period of recovery for two to three years – in 2002/3, households 'doing well' once again exceeded households that were 'struggling' – before another drought-triggered setback in 2003/4 caused the rapid deterioration in livelihoods that was still visible during our fieldwork in late 2004 and early 2005.

Even allowing for the "nostalgia effect" (a tendency to idealise the past, which can compromise long-term recall data), it seems reasonable to conclude that life is more difficult

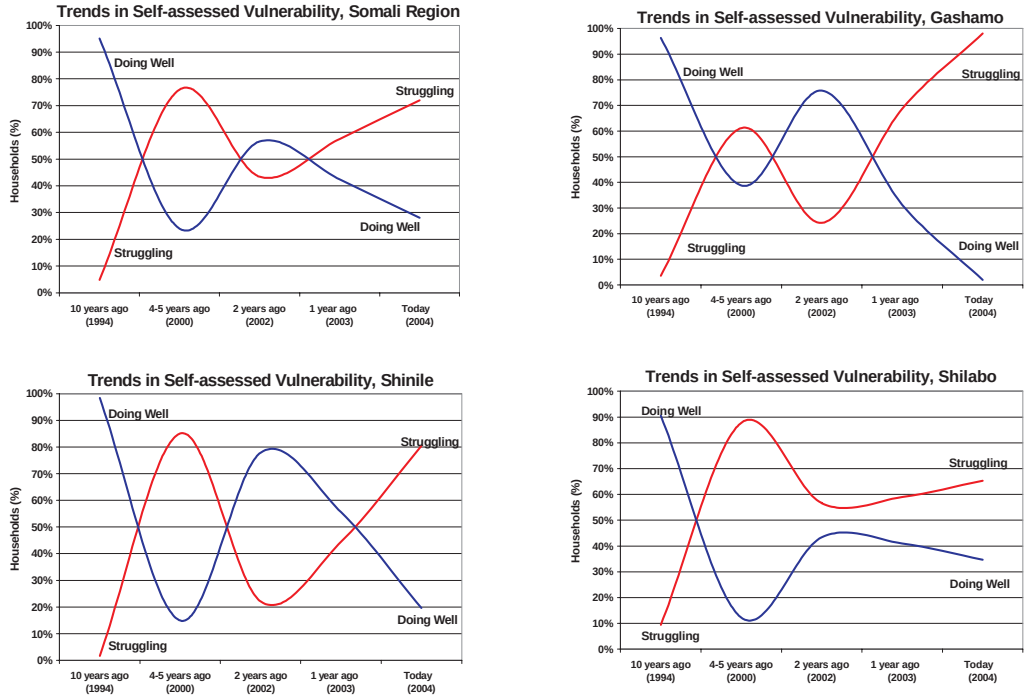
41 This question was first designed and applied in the Wollo Destitution Study (Devereux, Sharp and Amare 2003). Four possible responses are read out to the respondent, corresponding to descriptions of the household as either 'accumulating', 'self-sufficient', 'struggling', or 'destitute'.

now for most households in Somali Region than it was ten years ago. Also, the impact of livelihood shocks on household viability is clearly visible in this diagram, illustrating the volatility, unpredictability and hence extreme vulnerability of livelihoods in semi-arid regions.

The next three diagrams present the same data for our three pastoralist districts. Gashamo and Shilabo, both in the north of the region, have clearly been more severely affected by the recent drought than Shilabo. Gashamo was the epicentre of the 2004 drought, and this explains why almost all households claimed to be 'struggling' when interviewed (the highest proportion of any district surveyed). Shinile has also seen a rapid rise in 'struggling' households recently, following a strong and rapid recovery after the 2000 drought. On the other hand, Shilabo was relatively unaffected by the 2004 drought, but was very severely affected by the drought of 2000, which struck central Somali Region more than the north, and had its epicentre in nearby Gode District. (Compare the figures for '4–5 years ago', when about 60 per cent of Gashamo households but almost 90 per cent of Shilabo households were 'struggling'.)

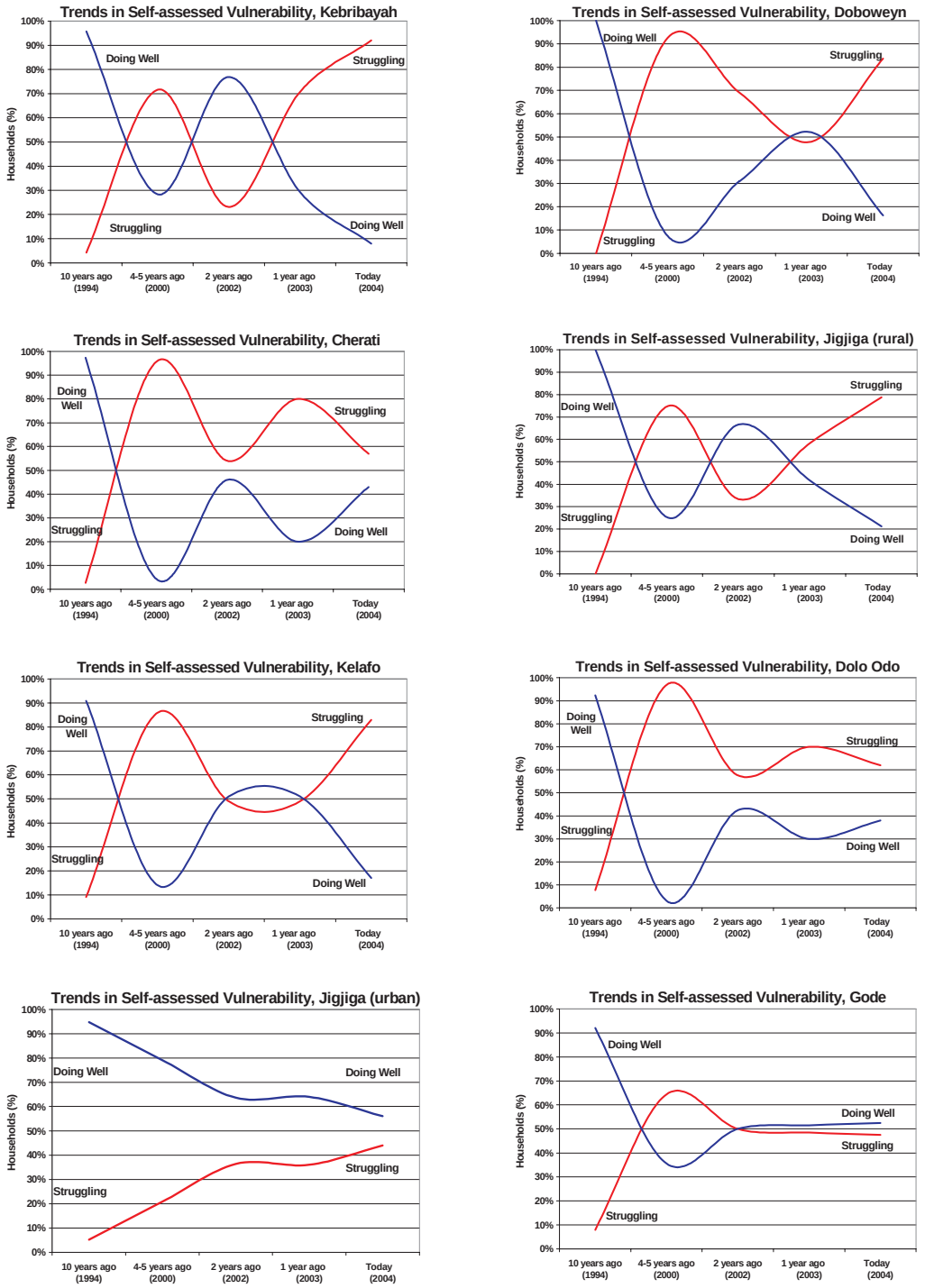
The next three diagrams are for agro-pastoralist districts surveyed. Kebribayah is located in northern Somali Region, between Gashamo and Shinile, but has the same rainfall system as Gashamo (as described earlier, Shinile has a different rainfall system) and follows a similar self-assessment trend to Gashamo. Households in Kebribayah were quite badly affected by the 2000 drought, but were recovering well until the 2004 drought knocked them back almost as severely as households in Gashamo. In both Gashamo and Kebribayah, the impact of the recent drought was undoubtedly compounded by the fact that they had been struck by a drought just three years earlier, and had insufficient time to rebuild their herds and flocks before the next drought struck. In the literature on famine, the evidence suggests that two moderate shocks in quick succession can be more devastating on livelihoods than a single major shock.[42] Doboweyn, in Korahe zone, lies between Gode and Shilabo District, and its self-assessment pattern is an exaggerated version of Shilabo's. Being closer to Gode, agro-pastoralist households in Doboweyn were more badly affected by the 2000 drought

Figure 8.1 **Trends in self-assessed vulnerability, by district**



42 Dyson and Ó Gráda (2002: 13) describe this phenomenon as 'bang-bang' famines: 'food crises often come in pairs – so-called "bang-bang" famines. Having been weakened by one food crisis a population will be more susceptible to another, unless circumstances improve.'

Figure 8.1 **Trends in self-assessed vulnerability, by district (cont.)**



and their recovery was slower. The recent drought has also affected them quite badly, reversing the positive trend since 2001.

Agro-pastoralists in Cherati and farmers in Dolo Odo have experienced similar patterns of vulnerability over the past decade. Both are located in the south of the region, and both reported an improvement in their livelihoods within the last year – the only two districts to display this encouraging trend. On the other hand, in both districts the proportion of 'struggling' households has consistently exceeded the proportion 'doing well' since the drought of 2000, which was more severe in central and southern zones of Somali Region. Since this major setback in 2000, these southern Somali communities have been steadily

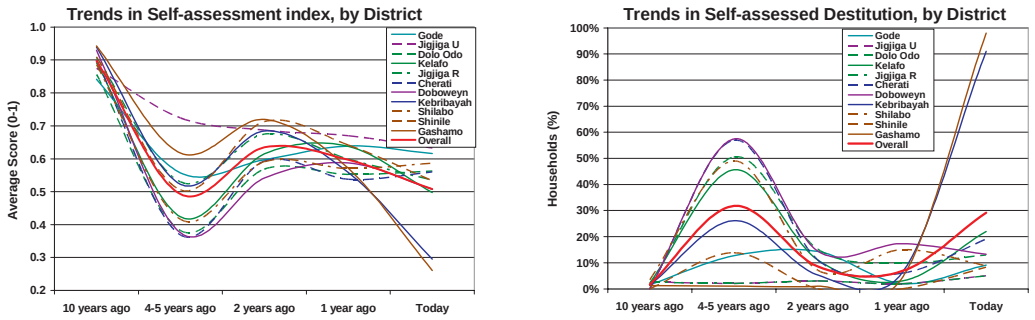
recovering. The 2004 drought affected them only mildly, and shows up on the diagrams as a "blip" that interfered with an ongoing recovery process which appeared to be back on track by mid-2005.[43]

Our sampled households in Kelafo and Dolo Odo are riverine farmers, whereas those interviewed in rural Jigjiga are sedentary farmers living on the Jigjiga plains. The diagram for Jigjiga farmers displays the same distinctive "double cross-over" pattern as for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households in other northern districts – Gashamo, Shinile and Kebribayah. Most households in rural Jigjiga were 'doing well' ten years ago, but the majority were 'struggling' around the time of the 2000 drought, then a recovery period followed during which those 'doing well' exceeded those 'struggling', until the 2004 drought reversed these numbers yet again. The time-lines for farmers in central and southern Somali Region are rather different. Farmers living along the Shabelle river (in Kelafo) or the Dawa/Ganale river (in Dolo Odo) – were affected by the 2000 drought almost as severely as pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in these zones. Although the 2004 drought did not impact significantly on their harvests, most households in Kelafo reported deteriorating livelihood conditions within the previous year, while Dolo Odo households, as noted, recorded a slight improvement in their circumstances.

The final two diagrams in Figure 8.1 are for the two urban sub-samples of Jigjiga and Gode towns. One significant feature of these diagrams is that the urban samples are the only two where more households self-report as 'doing well' than 'struggling'. A second feature to note is that livelihoods among both urban samples are less volatile than in the rural districts. Although the 2000 drought had a visible impact on livelihoods in Gode, this effect is less pronounced than in rural districts nearby like Doboweyn and Kelafo, and there has been little change in Gode's profile from year to year since then. In urban Jigjiga, well-being is reported as worsening over time, but at a linear rate rather than being buffeted by major shocks at irregular intervals. One possible explanation for the steady decline in self-assessed well-being is an influx of people displaced by droughts from rural areas, having lost the livestock that are the basis of their livelihoods. Another possible factor is the "nostalgia effect", but even if respondents in Jigjiga town are romanticising the past, it is clearly the case that livelihoods are less volatile, and that people feel better off, in urban areas.

Figure 8.2 presents the district-level data in the form of a 'self-assessment index' (which scales the responses to the self-assessment question between 0 and 1), and also highlights results for households defined as 'destitute' – dependent on assistance for their survival. The left-hand figure displays a consistent pattern of declining well-being from ten years ago to the present, but with a significant event in the middle of this period that divides the trajectory into three phases. The drought of 1999/2000 caused a sudden collapse in well-being of varying magnitude – biggest in Cherati, Doboweyn and Dolo Odo, least in the urban Jigjiga sample – followed by a recovery period that was ended abruptly in most sub-

Figure 8.2 **Trends in self-assessment index and destitution, Somali Region**



43 One factor that could partly explain why Cherati and Dolo Odo display uniquely rising numbers of households 'doing well' at the time of interview is that the southern leg of fieldwork was conducted last in the sequence, during the *Gu'* rains of May 2005, while households in central and northern Somali Region were interviewed in late 2004 and during the harsh *Jilaal* dry season of early 2005.

Table 8.1 **Mortality in Somali Region, 1991–2004/05, by district**

District	Households affected	Deaths Male	Female	Total	Deaths per household	Deaths per affected HH
Kelafo	51 (51%)	72	55	127	1.3	2.5
Gashamo	61 (61%)	70	59	129	1.3	2.2
Doboweyn	51 (51%)	70	48	118	1.2	2.4
Shilabo	56 (56%)	64	53	117	1.2	2.1
Dolo Odo	58 (58%)	60	39	99	1.0	1.7
Kebribayah	59 (59%)	45	44	89	0.9	1.5
Jigjiga town	43 (43%)	45	27	72	0.7	1.7
Cherati	43 (43%)	41	30	71	0.7	1.7
Shinile	37 (37%)	33	15	48	0.5	1.3
Jigjiga rural	29 (29%)	31	15	46	0.4	1.6
Gode	20 (20%)	18	8	26	0.3	1.3
Total	**508 (46.3%)**	**549**	**393**	**942**	0.9	1.9

Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

samples by the drought of 2004, which has caused a further deterioration in well-being that is sharpest in Gashamo and Kebribayah. This most recent collapse in livelihoods is very visible in the diagram on the right-hand side of Figure 8.2, which records households self-assessing as 'destitute' (unable to cope without assistance) as being close to 90 per cent in Kebribayah and well over 90 per cent in Gashamo, but in the range of only 5 per cent to 20 per cent in all other districts surveyed. One caveat should be noted: the timing of the survey – immediately after the drought peaked in Gashamo and Kebribayah but several months later in other districts – will have influenced people's perceptions of their situation at the time they were interviewed. On the other hand, the timing and relative magnitude of major livelihood shocks across districts corresponds surprisingly accurately with what we know about recent events in Somali Region.

8.2 Mortality

Premature death or "excess mortality" is one simple but robust indicator of "ill-being". It can isolate which age–sex cohorts are most vulnerable, where the vulnerable are located, and which years or seasons are associated with heightened risk. The household survey questionnaire asked respondents to report on all deaths that their household had suffered since the fall of Mengistu's government in 1991.[44] Almost half the households surveyed (n=508/1,098 =46.3 per cent) had suffered one or more deaths in this period of 13–14 years. The total number of deaths recorded was 942, making an average of 1.9 deaths in each of the 508 affected households (see Table 8.1, which ranks total mortality by district sub-sample).

Reported mortality was significantly higher in rural districts than in urban centres. In six out of nine rural districts, more than half the households interviewed had suffered one or more deaths since 1991, with the average being close to two deaths in each affected household. The proportion of affected households was highest in Gashamo (61 per cent) and Kebribayah (59 per cent), perhaps reflecting tragic memories of the recent drought which had its epicentre in these two districts. The number of deaths per affected household was highest in Kelafo (2.5) and Doboweyn (2.4). In the urban sample of Gode, fewer households had

44 The fall of the Derg regime was identified in pilot testing as a memorable event for recall purposes. Note that the data on mortality (and all other demographic data) presented in this report were not collected in a rigorous epidemiological survey, but as one module in a household questionnaire survey of 1,100 households, sampled from a region of four million people. These figures should not be extrapolated to Somali Region as a whole, but should be regarded as indicative of relative levels and trends across household categories.

Table 8.2 **Mortality in Somali Region per household, by age cohort**

Age cohort	*Total* Deaths	Per HH	*By gender* Male	Female	*By livelihood system* Pastor	Agro	Farm	Urban
0–4	559	0.51	0.29	0.22	0.56	0.55	0.65	0.16
5–9	65	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.09	0.05	0.06	0.03
10–14	32	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.01
15–19	25	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.01
20–29	45	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.03
30–39	36	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.06
40–59	47	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.07
60–79	81	0.07	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.10	0.05	0.10
80+	51	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.04
Total	**n/a**	**0.86**	**0.50**	**0.36**	**0.98**	**0.92**	**0.91**	**0.50**
Deaths	**941**	**n/a**	**548**	**391**	**294**	**276**	**292**	**99**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

suffered deaths (20 per cent) than anywhere else, and the total number of deaths was lowest (just 26 reported in 100 households) (Table 8.1).

Four times as many children died in rural households (0.59 deaths of children under five per household) than in urban centres (0.16 under-five deaths per household) (Table 8.2). The highest concentration of infant and child deaths is in farming households, which also have the lowest average (mean) age at death – just 10.7 years. This might reflect a higher susceptibility among farming communities to water-borne and communicable diseases, due to their densely settled permanent villages and proximity to disease vectors such as mosquitoes. In rural areas in general the average age at death (15.2 years) is less than half that in urban areas (33.3 years). When districts are ranked by average age at death, the two urban centres of Jigjiga and Gode top the list, followed by the six pastoralist and agro-pastoralist districts (where the range is 23.7 years in Kebribayah down to 12.1 years in Shilabo), with the three farming districts clustered at the bottom (8.7 to 11.1 years) (Table 8.3). In both urban samples, a significant number of (male) household heads had died, leaving widows who moved to town being unable to survive in the rural areas.

The number of deaths reported by year exceeded 100 only three times, all within the last five years: 2000, 2001 (when deaths for a single year peaked at 129) and 2004 (Figure 8.3).

Table 8.3 **Mean age at death in Somali Region, by location and livelihood**

District	Age	Livelihood	Age	(Standard deviation)
Jigjiga town (Urban)	36.4	Urban-based	33.3	(29.4)
Gode (Urban)	24.5	Agro-pastoralist	18.5	(27.7)
Kebribayah (Agro)	23.7	Pastoralist	16.5	(25.6)
Gashamo (Pastoral)	19.8	Farmer	10.7	(21.9)
Shinile (Pastoral)	18.4			
Cherati (Agro)	17.5			
Doboweyn (Agro)	15.2			
Shilabo (Pastoral)	12.1	**Location**	**Age**	
Dolo Odo (Farming)	11.1	Rural	15.2	
Kelafo (Farming)	11.1	Urban	33.3	
Jigjiga rural (Farming)	8.7			
Average	**17.2**			

Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

Figure 8.3 **Deaths per year, 1990–2004**

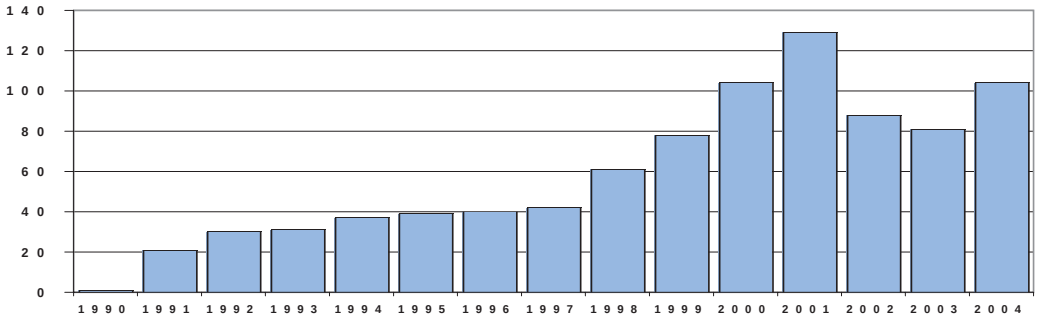
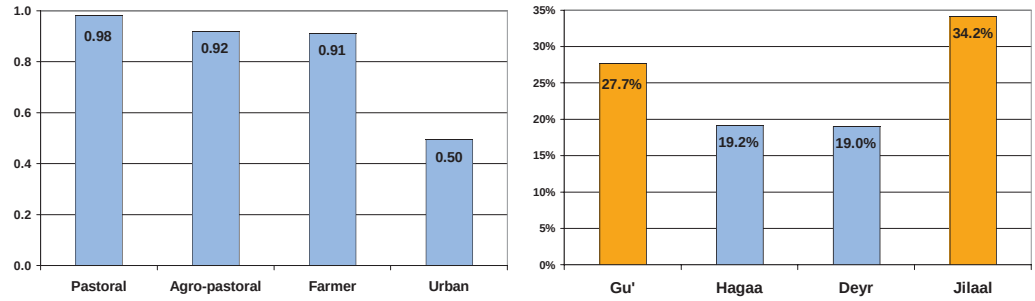


Figure 8.4 **Deaths per household and by season, 1992–2004**



It is not possible to assess how much of this is due to the "recency effect" (recent events being easier to recall), but these years correspond to episodes of major droughts and livelihood stress in Somali Region, so it is reasonable to attribute many of these deaths to these traumatic events. In the most recent five-year period alone (2000–4), these 1,100 households have suffered over 500 deaths (60 per cent of all reported deaths since 1990), at 0.46 deaths per household.

Confirming the fact that mortality is related to environmental stress factors is the breakdown of deaths by season. *Jilaal* is the hardest season in Somali Region, and this is reflected in the fact that more than one in three reported deaths occurred during *Jilaal* (Figure 8.4). The main rainy season is *Gu'*, and reported deaths in this season were also higher than during *Hagaa* and *Deyr*, probably because the incidence of diseases like malaria and diarrhoea is higher during the rains.

Figure 8.4 also confirms the locational bias of mortality in Somali Region, with almost twice as many deaths per household recorded in rural areas (0.94) than urban centres (0.50).

9 Drought and hunger

Fieldwork for this study was undertaken in the aftermath of a severe drought in Somali Region. This chapter explores the devastating impacts that drought inflicts on rural livelihoods in dryland areas, not only for livestock producers and their families but also for crop farmers, traders and service providers whose income depends, directly or indirectly, on livestock and/or rainfall. Next, we challenge the popular assertion that droughts in Somali Region are more frequent and more severe than in the past, by analysing available long-term rainfall data. Finally, we analyse access to water for different households, by their primary source of domestic water – *berkad*, wells, rivers and piped water – and consider the costs and vulnerabilities associated with each source.

9.1 Drought in Somali Region

Drought is part of the normal cycle of life in arid and semi-arid areas, where rainfall is low at the best of times and abnormally low every few years. Pastoralist livelihoods are sensitively attuned to conditions of low and variable rainfall. Droughts cannot be accurately predicted, but they are expected and pastoralist systems are well adapted to drought cycles. It follows that, while drought is a major *risk* factor affecting livestock-based livelihoods, the main source of *vulnerability* derives from the inability of pastoralism and related livelihoods to cope with drought. In other words, it is not drought as such that makes pastoralists vulnerable, but factors that constrain highly evolved drought-response mechanisms, especially mobility of people and animals – conflict, legal restrictions on trade, and so on. If these factors deteriorate over time, vulnerability to drought increases even if the incidence and severity of drought does not. Various vulnerability factors are examined in later chapters; here we focus on drought itself.

Drought was cited as the number one risk to people's livelihoods in almost every rural community visited in fieldwork for this study, whether the dominant livelihood activity locally was pastoralism, agro-pastoralism or farming. This response was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that the fieldwork took place in the aftermath of a severe drought in Somali Region in late 2003 and early 2004. Having warned earlier during 2003 of rising food insecurity in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA), in November a regional famine early warning system warned: 'The late onset of October–December (*deyr*) season rainfall will further imperil the food security of pastoralists over the Somali Region' (FEWS NET 2003a: 2). In December, the monthly early warning bulletin reported:

> Successive seasons of poor rainfall in 2003 and prior years, are compromising food security in several countries in GHA. An estimated 11–13 million people are experiencing drought induced food insecurity as well as livelihood crises, reduced resiliency in coping capabilities, policy issues, poorly working markets and disrupted alternative sources of food and income. … Ground reports indicated scarcity of pasture and water for livestock with consequences of abnormal but localized livestock migrations. (FEWS NET 2003b: 2)

By February 2004, at the height of the *Jilaal* season, FEWS NET (2004a: 1) was reporting that 'the eastern parts of Somali Region of Ethiopia [are] currently experiencing drought-induced food insecurity'. The following month, conditions were worsening: 'food insecurity in some countries in the Greater Horn of Africa continues to deteriorate, largely because of an increase in chronic vulnerability compounded by conflict and poor rainfall performance. … Food security conditions in Somali Region require close monitoring' (FEWS NET 2004b: 1). In April 2004, FEWS NET (2004c: 1) summarised the situation in Ethiopia as follows: 'Five years of rainfall variability, poverty and currently high food prices have heightened food insecurity of 7.1 million people currently requiring food aid, who are mainly pastoralists and chronically food insecure farmers.'

A food security assessment in Somalia in September 2004, following the *Gu'* rains (April–June), estimated that 700,000 people were in a state of 'humanitarian emergency'

Box 9.1 **Food insecurity in Warder Zone, Somali Region, August 2004**

'The food security situation in Warder Zone is poor and deteriorating due to a poor performance of the *Deyr* 2003 and *Gu'* 2004 rains, a continued presence of large numbers of livestock from Somalia, and water shortages due to borehole breakdowns. There are serious pasture and water shortages in most parts of the one, particularly in the eastern districts of Galadi and Bokh and Eastern parts of Warder District, where livestock concentrations are higher than normal. Most of these areas which are *berkad* dependent are currently running out of options for accessing water, and frequent and confused stress migrations are being seen. Expensive private water trucking has already started and in the worst hit areas one 200 lt drum costs 30,000 SoSh (up from 5000 normally). … Initial reports pertaining to the mortality of cattle and sheep are just coming from the worst affected areas of the Zone. The security situation seems to be improving under the ongoing reconciliation and negotiation efforts. Displaced households are beginning to return home, but pastoral resource sharing has not yet started in the rural areas, indicating that the situation is still fragile.'

Source: FSAU (2004: 29).

or 'livelihoods crisis'. Most of these people live in parts of Somaliland and Puntland (such as the Sool plateau) adjacent to Somali Region, which is experiencing a similar combination of environmental and governance problems, including protracted localised droughts, charcoal production, and civil conflict. This combination of chronic vulnerability factors and short-term shocks has been extremely severe for pastoralists in Somalia. 'Dominated by pastoral livelihoods, some areas in the North have suffered cumulative livestock deaths of upwards to 60 per cent for goats/sheep, and 80 per cent for camels. Already there are large numbers of destitute people who have "dropped out" of pastoralism and are now entirely dependent on social and humanitarian support' (FSAU 2004 1). The situation in neighbouring Somali Region at the same time was almost as serious (see Box 9.1).

Visible evidence of the most recent drought was provided by the significant numbers of animal carcasses – cattle, sheep, goats and even camels – seen by members of this study team in a scoping visit to Gashamo District, the epicentre of the crisis in Somali Region, in July 2004. This drought was given the local name *Tuur ku Qaat*, meaning "carry on your back" – when their pack animals died, pastoralists on the move had to transport everything themselves.

One immediate consequence of drought is to exacerbate the seasonal hunger that is a fact of life in rural communities throughout tropical Africa (Chambers, Pacey and Longhurst 1981). In Somali Region the hungry season coincides with the hot dry season (*Jilaal*), which runs from January to March and is associated with heightened vulnerability and higher mortality rates than any other time of year (as seen above). 'In pastoralist areas the hungry season is normally at the end of the dry season, when milk availability is low and animals are in poor condition' (SC-UK 2004: 183).

During the most recent *Jilaal* season before our survey, more than eight households in ten reported suffering a shortage of food (n=935/1,094 =85.5 per cent), while only one household in seven had sufficient food (n=159/1,094 =14.5 per cent). According to this indicator of hunger, food shortages were almost universal in rural districts such as Doboweyn (100 per cent), Shinile (99 per cent), Dolo Odo (98 per cent), Cherati and Kebribayah (97 per cent). Food shortages were less prevalent in our urban samples of Jigjiga (27 per cent) and Gode (62 per cent) (Table 9.1), which is not surprising, since urban livelihoods are less dependent on rainfall and urban residents tend to earn higher and less variable incomes.

Shortages of food translated into rationing of consumption, following the same pattern across districts. Only 15 per cent of adults in our survey ate three meals a day throughout the preceding year, even during the worst months. More than half reduced their consumption to two meals a day, while most adults in drought-affected Gashamo and

Table 9.1 **Indicators of hunger in 2004, by district**

District	Food shortage (%)	*Meals per day: Adults** 0 (%)	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	Mean	*Meals per day: Children** 0 (%)	1 (%)	2 (%)	3+ (%)	Mean
Pastoralist	**92**	**3**	**40**	**49**	**7**	**1.6**	**2**	**8**	**76**	**13**	**2.0**
Gashamo	93	9	76	12	3	1.1	3	13	80	4	1.9
Shinile	99	0	11	87	1	1.9	1	5	80	11	2.0
Shilabo	85	1	34	48	17	1.8	1	6	68	25	2.2
Agro-pastoral	**98**	**0**	**41**	**56**	**1**	**1.6**	**0**	**15**	**77**	**7**	**1.9**
Kebribayah	97	1	65	32	1	1.3	0	18	79	2	1.8
Doboweyn	100	0	31	65	2	1.7	1	10	82	5	1.9
Cherati	97	0	27	72	1	1.7	0	18	69	13	2.0
Farmer	**94**	**1**	**25**	**69**	**4**	**1.8**	**2**	**12**	**77**	**9**	**2.0**
Jigjiga rural	89	0	9	82	9	2.0	4	8	75	13	2.0
Kelafo	95	4	33	59	3	1.6	0	10	80	9	2.0
Dolo Odo	98	0	33	67	0	1.7	1	17	76	6	1.9
Urban	**45**	**0**	**10**	**28**	**62**	**2.5**	**1**	**2**	**25**	**73**	**2.7**
Jigjiga town	27	0	13	14	73	2.6	0	0	17	83	2.8
Gode town	62	0	7	42	50	2.4	1	3	32	63	2.6
Average	**85.6 %**	**1%**	**31%**	**53%**	**15%**	**1.8**	**1%**	**10%**	**68%**	**21%**	**2.1**

* 0 = 'Sometimes passed a whole day without eating anything'; 3+ means that children sometimes eat four times a day.
Source: Household survey data (n=1,094).

Kebribayah cut down to just one meal a day. A clear indication that the drought had its epicentre in Gashamo is the evidence that rationing was most severe in this district, where many adults and some children passed entire days without eating. Conversely, food consumption in urban Gode and Jigjiga was apparently unaffected by the drought – average consumption by adults remained well above two meals per day throughout the year, and close to three meals for children in Jigjiga. Empirical evidence from studies of food insecurity and famine in a range of contexts reveals that parents tend to protect the food intake of their children preferentially – for instance, when parents cut down to two meals their children continue to eat three times daily. Our survey finds confirmation that this behaviour is practised in Somali Region. In all districts, adults protected the food consumption of children by rationing their own food intake more severely (Table 9.1).

Although drought and hunger were severe in many communities in 2004, it was not exceptional. Somali Region has in fact suffered a series of droughts since 1999/2000, and some areas have faced three years or more of below average rainfall. Earlier droughts were also mentioned by people interviewed for this study as major livelihood shocks. In central and southern districts, the drought of 1999/2000 was said to be the most severe in living memory, as it caused substantial human and animal mortality. 'People started feeding on the carcases of dead animals and some even boiled animal skins to feed on.' In Kelafo District, near the epicentre in Gode, a local name for this drought was *Barbar*, meaning "inflammation", because those affected had swollen bellies and necks.[45] In Shinile District, the same drought was named *Soodaf* ("abandoned"), because all that was left of animals that died of thirst were their carcases, which were abandoned to hyenas. The famine of

45 A food crisis in Malawi in 2002 was also nicknamed "the swelling" by local people, because many adults and children suffered from oedema which caused their bellies, legs and arms to swell.

1974 was given the name of Abarti daba deer ("long-tailed") by people throughout the Ogaden and Somalia, because it was triggered by a drought that lasted for two years.

There is a widespread perception in Somali Region that droughts occur more frequently than in the past. 'I remember when I was a child, the droughts didn't happen so often.'[46] People also believe that periods between droughts are shorter, interrupting the recovery process. 'Nowadays, it seems there's a drought just after two or three years. In the past there was enough time between droughts for restocking before the next drought hit.'[47]

One consequence of recurrent droughts in rapid succession is that "poverty ratchets" are set up, especially in pastoralist households which need longer to rebuild herds and flocks than farmers need to return to "normal" harvests. Livestock traders also suffer from this "ratchet" effect, as their capital is tied up in their animals. One trader explained how he lost his bulls in the drought of 2000, so, having less capital, switched to sheep, only to lose them in the drought of 2004.

> In 2000, I had accumulated some 80 bulls, which I hoped to sell at a good profit. When the drought hit, I lost the bulls. They died near Ali Jama. In 2003 I bought 120 male sheep which I planned to fatten for sale in the following year. Now am I left with 40 sheep, which I cannot see surviving this drought.[48]

Another reason why the drought of 2004 had such a heavy impact on pastoralists in Gashamo is that its severity was underestimated, so appropriate pre-emptive measures – such as selling animals before prices collapsed – were not taken by most local livestock owners.

> Before the drought I had 150 goats and 55 cattle, but I have only 10 goats left now. We did not think this drought would be so severe. We have met many droughts before, and only lost a few animals each time. We didn't realise until it was too late to sell the animals that it was such a bad drought.[49]

A typical feature of drought in pastoralist communities is a decline in the "barter terms of trade" (livestock to grain prices), as the value of livestock falls while staple food prices rise. This was documented in Turkana, Kenya in the 1980s (Swift 1989), and also affected Gashamo in 2004. 'People are dependent on animals which are affected by the drought. Most of the animals are very ill and weak and we can no longer barter-exchange a grown sheep for the 50-kilo sack of food.'[50]

Although droughts affect livelihoods in rural areas most directly and immediately, since livestock and crop production depend directly on rainfall, traders and service providers whose business depends on rural incomes are also negatively affected, as they face declining demand for their goods and services. Retail stores in rural settlements lost income, and several stores were forced to close down. ('Most businesses are struggling to find enough customers'; 'The families who were our customers are buying only one quarter what they used to take.') Another case in point is the market for milk. While exporters complained of declining supplies of milk in 2004, people who sell milk locally complained of declining demand. 'During the drought period, the supply of milk goes down. This month [November] we are suffering because of limited supplies. This is not usual; we used to export large quantities of milk at this time of year. We also struggle to get buyers.'

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46 Case study interview, female *khat* seller, Gashamo.

47 Case study interview, woman stall-owner, Gashamo.

48 A *jeble* in Gashamo.

49 Case study interview, male pastoralist, Gashamo.

50 Agropastoralist, rural Kebribayah.

This indirect impact of drought on livelihoods has been labelled 'derived destitution' (Sen 1981), and it has a levelling effect on most people in the drought-affected area. 'The last drought made us all equal in terms of poverty: we call it "*Sima*" – the equaliser.'[51] The reason for this indirect impact on businesses that do not depend directly on rainfall is that households facing food stress impose austerity measures almost immediately – for instance by rationing food consumption and cutting back on non-essential spending – and there is not enough buying power in those parts of the economy that are not reliant on rain. One group who suffered the consequences of this coping behaviour in 2004 were traders who sell cloth to pastoralists:

> I am a cloth seller. It is not a good business these days. Before the drought, men would come into the village to sell animals and buy cloths. Now everybody is poor, and the men have no animals and no spare money to buy things like cloths which are not a necessity.[52]

A woman who runs a stall selling groceries in Gashamo town explained how drought impacts on her business. 'When there are good rains, we get lots of good customers. Then the pastoralists come and buy goods from me. But when the rains are bad, my business is also bad.' A butcher in Gashamo explained how drought undermines his business in complex ways:

> Because of the droughts, there are periods when there are few animals like goats. Then, the prices we pay for these animals are still high. At the same time, because the goats are very thin and the quality of the meat isn't so good, people aren't willing to pay good prices for the meat. So, we can end up making a loss or just making a little. In non-drought years, our profits are greater because the animals are cheaper, and our customers will pay more because the animals are healthy and fatter.

Very few income-earning activities are impervious to the general impoverishment that drought brings. An intriguing exception is running a tea-shop. 'The best business, the one that is most drought-resistant, is having a tea-shop, because tea is cheap! There is always a market for it, even during droughts.'[53] Another business that actually profits from droughts is *khat* trading and retailing, because – unlike other 'non-essential' spending – demand for *khat* increases when times are hard.

> I sell *khat*. Luckily, *khat* isn't badly affected by the drought. In fact, it seems now because of the drought, men are chewing more *khat*, so my business is actually better than before when men were busy with their animals.[54]

This is one way in which droughts are blamed for undermining not only the economic basis of the pastoralist system but also the basis of the culture and society, as traditional sharing institutions are undermined and men who have lost their animals are reduced to chewing *khat*.

> These droughts are destroying the Somalis because they're destroying our culture. They are making it impossible for us to practise our traditions. The droughts are also causing men to chew so much *khat* – that's also affecting our traditions. Just like the fact that the droughts are wiping out the men's livestock – livestock are central to Somali culture.[55]

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51 Life history interview, female teashop owner, rural Gashamo.

52 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

53 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

54 Case study interview, woman *khat* seller, Gashamo.

55 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

Box 9.2 **Environmental degradation in Somalia**

'Evidence indicates that environmental degradation is accelerating and undermining current and future livelihoods and food security throughout Somalia. Uncontrolled destruction of the environment is severely affecting all productive areas, not only pastoral rangelands, but also productive agricultural lands. In pastoral rangelands, environmental degradation is resulting from a number of factors, including excessive tree clearing for charcoal production and exportation, lack of rangeland management, increased sedentarisation due to proliferation of *berkeds*, and one of the worst prolonged droughts in recent times. In agricultural productive areas, it is due to uncontrolled and accelerated tree clearing and charcoal production, invasion of foreign weeds and noxious plants, encroachment of sand dunes, and increasing trends of erratic and below normal rainfall.'

Source: FSAU (2004: 3).

Droughts also cause a rise in domestic stress and even marital breakdown, as men lose their central economic role and status within the family, and women lose patience with husbands who, having lost their animals, do nothing to bring in income to feed the children.

> I have two daughters and two sons, but I'm divorced. The reason I left my husband was because he was just sitting and not doing anything, not earning any income. I couldn't stay with someone who was not doing anything useful.[56]

The perception that droughts are increasing in Somali Region, and that their cumulative impacts are placing intolerable stress on local livelihoods, is contributing to growing disillusionment with pastoralism as a way of life.[57] 'All our lives we wasted in pastoralism and we have nothing to show for it as we are now herd-less due to drought.'[58] An ex-pastoralist family, displaced to Sagarabuur IDP camp on the outskirts of Gode town by the drought of 2000, spoke about how the recent succession of droughts has created a new class of people – a "herd-less society".

> I don't want a pastoralist life anymore because I'm too scared of droughts. The droughts aren't going to stop: there are too many people and too many animals, and the land and grazing is getting less. The rains are not as much: everything is drier and hotter. Trees that we grew up with have died and will never come back again.[59]

When asked why the impacts of droughts today are more severe than in the past, many people echoed this Malthusian explanation – "too many people and too many animals" – and the effects of these demographic pressures on the natural resource base, as people adopt coping strategies that exacerbate environmental stress, such as fencing off land and burning charcoal.

> In the past, there were many places where you could take your animals without going so far away. There were fewer people so there was a lot of space. The other problem today is that some people are fencing off land so there is less space to roam with animals. No people used to do that before. People are fencing off land because they want to burn it and use it for charcoal burning. This is also making it difficult to find land easily for animals.[60]

56 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

57 This issue of changing Somali attitudes to the future of pastoralism is explored later in this report.

58 Women's focus group participant, Shinile District.

59 A woman in Gashamo District.

60 A woman in Gashamo District.

Similar pressure on natural resources is reportedly occurring in neighbouring Somalia, which is environmentally similar and, in many ways, economically integrated with Somali Region (Box 9.2).

9.2 Rainfall trends

Since at least the 1960s, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and other outsider experts have predicted the demise of pastoralism in Ethiopia, because of human and livestock populations exceeding the carrying capacity of the land. In February 2005, FEWS NET argued that pastoralist livelihoods in the Greater Horn of Africa are 'collapsing': 'Continuing drought, increased competition for grazing lands, conflict, disrupted livestock trade, and limited regional market options put the sustainability of the pastoralist livelihood in question' (FEWS NET 2005: 1). In support of this argument, FEWS NET presented a rainfall graph for selected pastoral areas (including Gode in Ethiopia), illustrating that annual rainfall has been well below 300mm – 'the minimum amount of annual rainfall needed to support viable pastures in the Horn' – for most of the ten years between 1995 and 2004.

A closer look at long-run rainfall data from Somali Region reveals a more complex story. It is true that rainfall in Gode is very low, and that there appears to be a decline since the mid-1990s. In 1997, Gode enjoyed almost 500mm of rain (a record high since at least 1972), but in the drought year three years later, just 134mm. However, over the 30 years for which data are available, the trend in annual rainfall has in fact been increasing (Figure 9.1). Rainfall in the 1980s and 1990s was higher than in the 1970s, and statistically identical to the early 2000s (Figure 9.2a). Note also that the bar representing the 2000s is an average for only three years; this average could rise (or fall) as the decade proceeds. Total rainfall has exceeded 300mm only

Figure 9.1 **Total annual rainfall, Gode, 1957–2002 (mm)**[61]

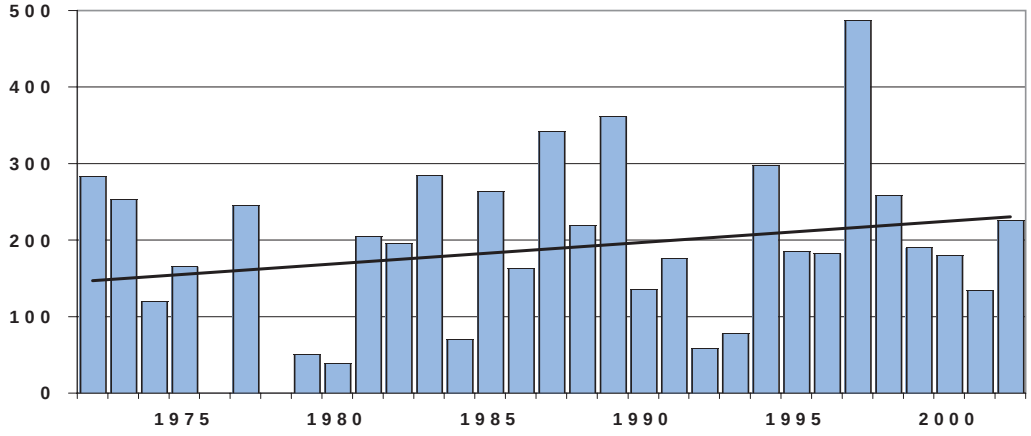
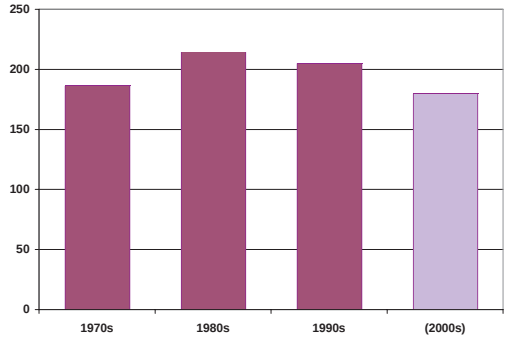
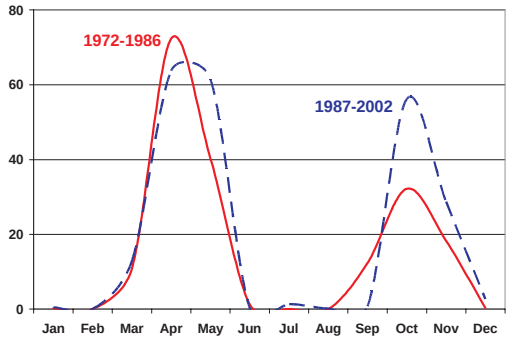


Figure 9.2. **Long-run rainfall trends, Gode (mm)**



(a) Average annual rainfall by decade (mm)



(b) Average monthly rainfall (mm)

61 All the rainfall data analysed in this section were provided by Ethiopia's National Meteorological Services Agency.

Figure 9.3 **Total annual rainfall, Jigjiga, 1952–2002 (mm)**

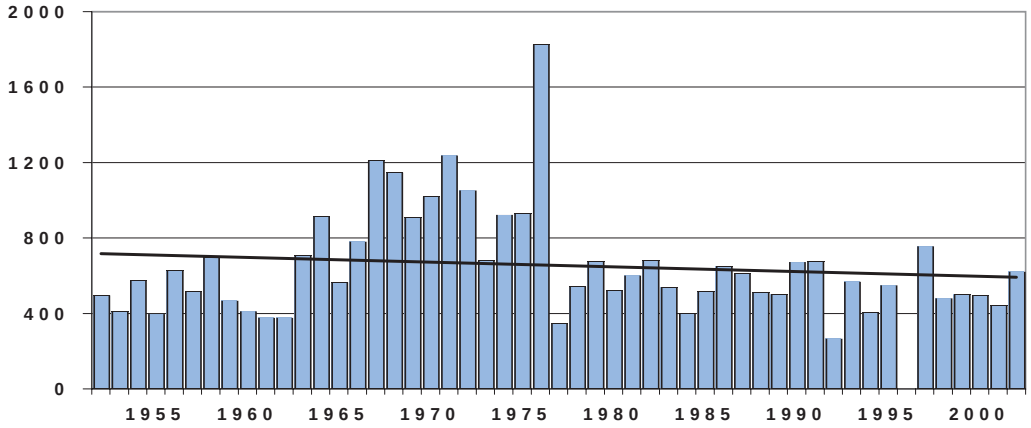
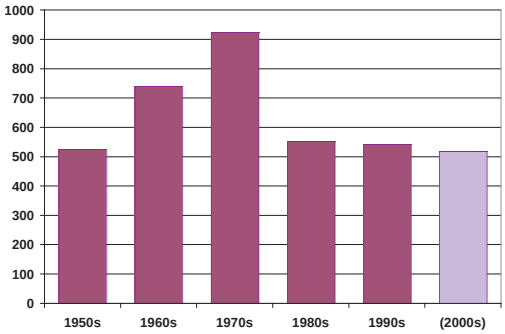
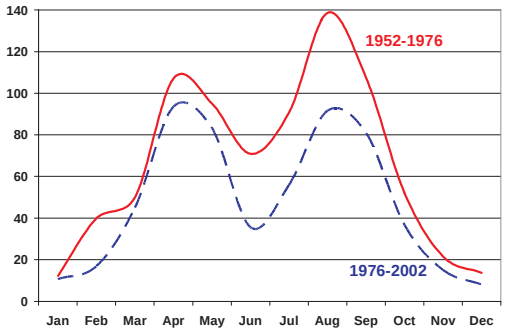


Figure 9.4 **Long-run rainfall trends, Jigjiga (mm)**



(a) Average annual rainfall by decade (mm)



(b) Average monthly rainfall (mm)

three times in 30 years, so by this criterion pastoralism has been unviable in central Somali Region for a very long time. Nor was the drought of 2000 exceptionally severe – in five years since 1972 (1979, 1980, 1984, 1992 and 1993) Gode received less than 100mm of rain.

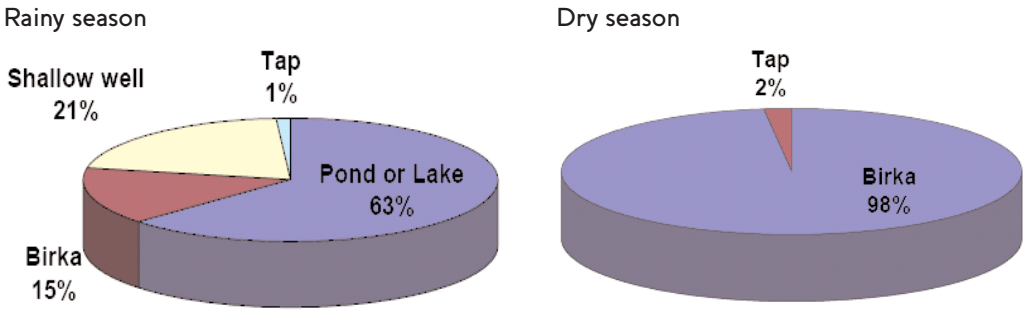
Analysis of monthly rainfall trends for Gode confirms the typical lowland Horn of Africa pattern of two dry seasons (*Jilaal* and *Hagaa*), in the first and third quarters of the calendar year, and two rainy seasons (*Gu'* and *Deyr*), in the second and fourth quarters. Dividing the 30 years of rainfall data into two halves, it is interesting to note that the average volume of *Gu'* rains has remained more or less consistent over the years since 1972, but that the *Deyr* rains have generally been higher since 1986 than before (Figure 9.2b). It is this increase in *Deyr* rainfall that accounts for the trend increase in annual precipitation over the last three decades.

Rainfall data for Jigjiga, in the northern part of Somali Region, are very different to those for Gode in the centre. For one thing, there is some evidence of the third rainy season (*Karan*) in mid-year that is typical of neighbouring highland regions (where it is called *Kremt*). This means that rain falls almost continuously between April and September (Figure 9.2b), which allows long-maturing rainfed crops to be cultivated, unlike other parts of Somali Region where only riverine or irrigated farming is possible.

Second, annual rainfall is considerably higher, averaging 630mm per annum for the period 1972–2002 (more than double FEWS NET's 'pastoralist viability threshold') as against 190mm for Gode over the same period. Third, while a slight upward trend in annual rainfall was observed for Gode, in Jigjiga the trend since the 1970s has been downwards. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, rainfall in Jigjiga was almost always in excess of 800mm, exceeding 1,000mm six times and peaking at 1,825mm in 1976. Strikingly, however, since 1976 total rainfall has never once reached 800mm again (Figure 9.3).

This might seem to provide persuasive evidence for a long-term, irreversible decline in average rainfall in Jigjiga. On the other hand, 50 years of rainfall data are available for

Figure 9.5 **Sources of water in *birka*-dependent areas of Somali Region**



Source: Household survey (n=232).

Jigjiga, and this reveals that the decade before the mid-1960s was comparable to the 1980s and 1990s, with an annual average just above 500mm and no single year achieving 800mm. Even a period of 50 years is too short to provide definitive evidence of long-term trends in rainfall, but it is enough to suggest that a long cycle may be in operation, rather than an irreversible decline. Certainly, both sets of data (for Gode and Jigjiga) throw doubts on the strong claims made by FEWS NET (based on just 10 years of rainfall figures) that pastoralism is becoming unsustainable in the Greater Horn of Africa because of rainfall that is persistently below minimum thresholds of viability.

9.3 Access to water

Access to water is always a major livelihood concern in lowland areas, for human consumption (drinking, cooking, washing), livestock consumption (watering animals), and crop production. This section examines the various sources of water available to the residents of Somali Region, and the cost of water when it needs to be purchased.

Perhaps because rainfall in Somali Region is very low (ranging, as we have seen, from over 600mm in the north to under 300mm in the south) and variable, several alternative sources of water are available, including rivers, ponds, boreholes, shallow and deep wells, rainwater harvesting, *berkad* communal and private taps, and water tankers. Different parts of the region can be characterised as having distinct "water systems", which differ for humans and animals, and also alter significantly between the rainy and dry seasons. These water systems are best defined by how people access water during the dry season, when water is scarce. On this basis, four distinct water systems can be identified among the 11 districts where fieldwork was conducted: *birka*-dependent, well-dependent, river-dependent, and piped water (taps or boreholes).

9.3.1 *Birka*-dependent communities

In the most arid parts of Somali Region, notably in Warder Zone to the east, people and animals are almost totally dependent on constructed *berkad* for their water in the dry season. In our survey, most households in Gashamo and Kebribayah, and one-third of households in Shilabo, are *birka*-dependent. This dependence is especially acute during the dry season. During the rainy season, more diversified sources of water are available, including ponds and shallow wells that accumulate rainwater, but dry up when the rains end. These water sources are preferred not only for their convenience, but also because they are free, whereas access to *berkad* costs money.

Figure 9.5 illustrates access to water for people in Gashamo District.[62] During the rainy season, people and livestock share several sources of water, dominated by standing water in

62 Since the sources of water in each "water system" are almost identical for people and livestock, only human sources are shown here.

ponds or lakes, followed by shallow wells. In the dry season, however, ponds, lakes and wells dry up and water consumption switches almost entirely to *berkad*, for both humans and livestock. This has three important implications. First, since standing water is dangerous to human health unless boiled, and since people share the same water sources as their animals all year round, it is likely that shifting from ponds and wells to *berkad* represents no health improvement in terms of access to clean water. Second, since *berkad* are often privately owned while ponds and lakes are open access, water for both humans and animals often has to be paid for during the dry season, and this introduces economic rationing of water, especially for the poor. Third, control over water sources also allows *berkad* owners to exclude people from access to water and thus surrounding grazing resources, which can restrict mobility of animals to migration routes that have friendly *berkad* owners. Alternatively, restricted access to *berkad* can provoke confrontation – this is in fact a common cause of conflict in Somali Region.

Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists are more likely to pay for water than are farmers. In the arid districts of eastern Somali Region, especially during the dry season, there is often no alternative to *berkad*, and most *berkad* are fenced off and privately owned. *Berkad* are invariably owned by wealthier people, who earn substantial amounts of income from selling water for domestic use and livestock. Conversely, poorer people spend significant amounts on buying water. Almost all purchased water is obtained from *berkad*, with access and price being negotiated individually in each case. Prices paid for water vary seasonally, rising quite dramatically during the hot dry *Jilaal* season. 'There is no definite amount charged. It depends on how severe the situation is.'[63]

In some places people pay for their water all year round, but even in these cases prices paid in the dry season are higher than in the rainy season. One household in Kebribayah that collected its domestic water from a fenced pond in the rainy season of 2004 paid the "owner" 10 Birr for each 200-litre barrel. In the dry season the pond dried up and the household switched to buying water from a *birka*, but at the considerably higher price of 40 Birr per barrel. Also in Kebribayah, several households that purchased water from a *birka* all year round paid 5 Birr per barrel in the rainy season, but 20 Birr per barrel in the dry season. This household also reported that they and several neighbours make advance payments to a local *birka* owner, to secure their access rights to water during the dry season. 'During the *Jilaal* there is a shortage of water, so we will make an advance payment. The maximum is 100 Birr and the minimum is 10 Birr to reserve that water.'[64]

The commercialisation of water in pastoralist areas introduces a new source of vulnerability – the rationing of water by ability to pay – which is compounded in drought years, when water is scarce and prices rise to reflect constrained supplies. In Gashamo, the price paid for a 200-litre barrel (oil-drum) of water is typically in the range of 7,000 to 10,000 Somaliland Shillings (10 to 50 Birr) during the rainy months, and 20,000 to 40,000 Somaliland Shillings (30 to 60 Birr) in the dry months. However, several pastoralists interviewed in late 2004 reported paying as much as 100,000 Somaliland Shillings per barrel (150 Birr) – an exceptionally high price – explaining that the drought had pushed prices up to unprecedented levels. During the peak of the drought, water tankers were sent by the regional government to deliver water to the worst affected communities, charging a more affordable 20 Birr for a 200-litre barrel.

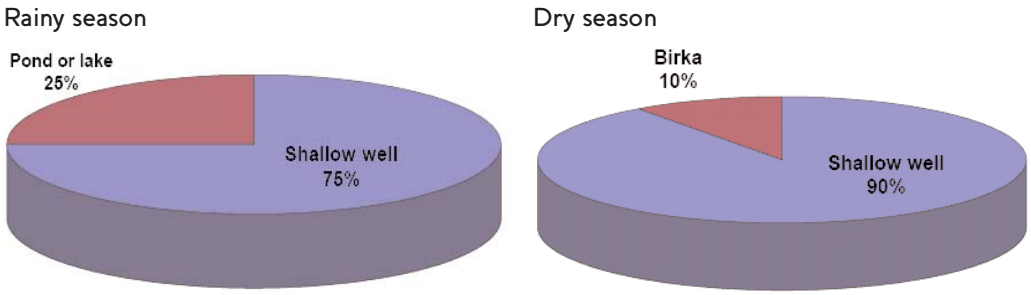
9.3.2 Well-dependent communities

In many pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities where adequate groundwater is available, the main source of water all year round is hand-dug wells. In our household survey, shallow or deep wells are the dominant source of water for both livestock and people, during both the rainy and dry seasons, in Doboweyn, Shilabo and Shinile Districts. During the rainy season, wells are complemented by standing water in ponds or lakes. In the

63 Male pastoralist, rural Gashamo.

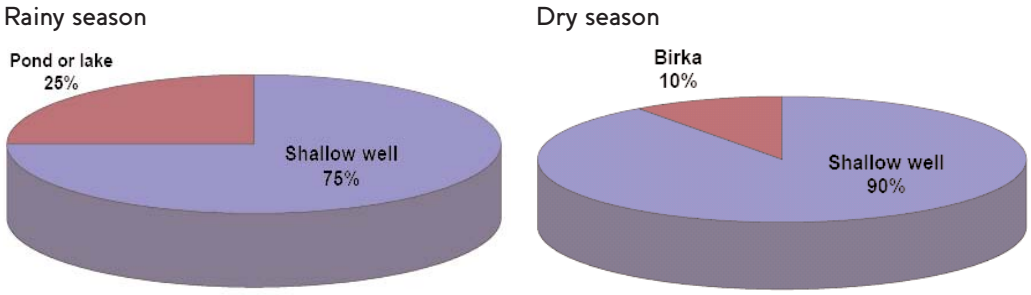
64 Agropastoralist, rural Kebribayah.

Figure 9.6 **Sources of water in well-dependent areas of Somali Region**



Source: Household survey (n=298).

Figure 9.7 **Sources of water in river-dependent areas of Somali Region**



Source: Household survey (n=298).

dry season, dependence on wells intensifies, with a few people accessing water from *berkad*, which may even be located in other districts, as pastoralists move in search of water for themselves and their animals (Figure 9.6).

A case in point is Lasoole, in Shilabo District. There are some 25 wells in and around Lasoole. These wells belong mainly to clans, although some are owned by individuals. Access to water from these wells is free and unrestricted for the clans living in the area, for their animals, and for those who migrate to Lasoole in search of water – provided that water is plentiful. 'It is common practice among Somalis to share water – there is a strong reciprocal arrangement among and between us.'[65] Selling water from wells is seen as shameful; even people with private wells do not deny others from using them.

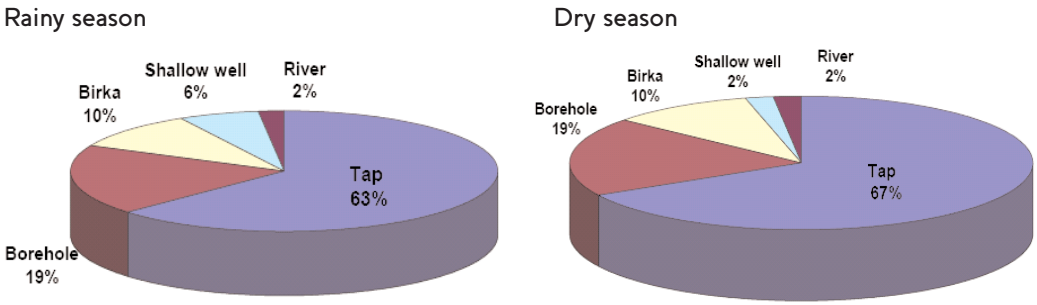
The use of wells does sometimes result in conflict, however. One source of tension arises from individuals wanting their animals to use the wells first, as less labour is involved in drawing water when the water level is high. Preferential access is given to the well owner, his family (we found no cases of women owning wells) and clan members, with strangers coming last in the queue. A second source of conflict occurs when someone digs a well too close to another, as this can lead to a lowering of the water level of the adjacent well. To avoid this possibility and ensure properly planned wells, people are required to consult their community elders before digging a new well. When confrontations over water do occur, the problem is referred to the elders for arbitration.

9.3.3 River-dependent communities

There are only two permanent rivers in Somali Region. The Wabe Shabelle river has its source in Oromiya Region to the west, bypasses Gode town and flows into Somalia. Inside Somali Region, it provides a natural boundary between Gode and Afder administrative zones. Further south, the Dawa/Ganale/Web river system forms a natural boundary

65 Key informant, Shilabo District.

Figure 9.8 **Sources of water in urban areas of Somali Region**



Source: Household survey (n=199).

between Afder and Liban Zones. Most of the communities living along the riverbanks or within walking distance depend on the river for their domestic water needs, and also water their animals at the river. This is especially the case during the dry season, when other sources of surface water (ponds, lakes) and shallow wells dry up, and the river becomes the only freely accessible water source.

This pattern of water use is evident from the three communities in our household survey that live in the vicinity of either the Shabelle or the Dawa/Ganale watershed – namely, the residents of Cherati, Dolo Odo and Kelafo (Figure 9.7).

Because they live in arable rather than arid areas of Somali Region, these farmers generally enjoy privileged access to rivers for domestic water that are free of charge – unlike pastoralists, they rarely have to pay for water for drinking, cooking and washing. On the other hand, being sedentary and dependent on water for their livelihood introduces different forms of vulnerability. As described earlier in this report (see Chapter 3), riverine farming in Kelafo District has been threatened by the construction of a large dam near Gode town in the late 1990s, which has diverted water from the Shabelle river, permanently reducing downstream flow and seasonal floodwaters. Farmers in Kelafo argue they are now forced to pay wealthy people with mechanical pumps to pump river water to their fields. 'We are at the mercy of owners of pump owners who charge exorbitant prices for irrigating our farms. They are charging us up to a third of the grain we produce, or 10 Birr per hour.'[66]

Other farmers pay pump owners to lift water from the river to fields located on higher ground. The traditional crop irrigation system can only channel upstream river water along furrows to fields located downstream, but mechanical pumps extend the range of irrigation by some distance. People who live further from the river also have to pay people who own donkey-carts to collect water for them. Another risk of depending on river water for human consumption is its impacts on health. River water in Somali Region is not treated and people rarely boil it before drinking it.

9.3.4 Piped-water-dependent communities

Within Somali Region, piped water is provided almost exclusively in the major urban settlements of Jigjiga and Gode town. There are very few boreholes, and virtually no taps, in pastoralist areas and farming communities. There are many advantages to drinking tap water rather than untreated surface water from ponds, hand-dug wells or rivers. One of the main benefits is to human health. The incidence of water-borne diseases is much lower in towns with a clean piped water supply – or at least in those parts of towns where taps and boreholes are provided and are free or affordable. In informal settlements on the outskirts of towns like Gode, people displaced and made destitute by the drought of 1999/2000 were extremely vulnerable to disease because of their overcrowded and unsanitary living

66 Community discussion, Kelafo District.

conditions, and thousands of people died from preventable diseases, many of which were water-borne (IDS 2002).

Piped tap water for domestic use is not free, but the cost is predictable and does not vary from season to season. As we have seen, urban residents have higher average incomes. Moreover, they own few livestock, if any, and are not farming, so they have no need to purchase water for animals or crops. People in Jigjiga town with piped water in their homes pay the municipality for tap water, usually around 30–40 Birr per month.

A third important advantage of piped water is its reliability over time, especially when compared to sources of water that derive, directly or indirectly, from rainfall. In a region where variability is the norm in so many crucial respects, vulnerability is reduced when the risk of variability is minimised. People living in Jigjiga and Gode towns enjoy the most consistent access to water of any group in Somali Region. As seen in Figure 9.8, there is virtually no seasonal variation in urban sources of water – a marked contrast to all other water systems in the region.

10 Conflict

Conflict and insecurity are common in pastoralist societies, for reasons discussed below, and Somali Region is no exception. Conflict arises, however, from a variety of sources, and it is important not to stereotype pastoralist areas in general as violent and unstable, but instead to disaggregate conflict in each specific context. This chapter reviews the multiple causes of conflict affecting Somali Region, and the various impacts of violence and insecurity on local livelihoods.

10.1 The complex nature of conflict in Somali Region

Conflict and civil insecurity in Somali Region take several distinct forms, including war (the legacy of the Ethiopia–Somalia war and Somalia's civil war); rebel or militia activity (conflicts between ONLF and government forces); inter-clan resource conflicts (over access to water, grazing and farmland); and inter-regional border disputes (with neighbouring Oromiya and Afar). Civil insecurity is fuelled by the proliferation of small arms throughout the region. Some conflicts, especially those that occur between or within clans, are mediated by traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and compensation payment procedures. A final manifestation of physical insecurity is invisible or 'latent' conflict (disputes between groups that do not necessarily erupt into episodes of violence), and is best expressed by the Somali word *aabsi*, meaning "fear of confrontation".

The war between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977–8 (commonly referred to in the region as '7-7') caused massive population displacement, with up to one million Ethiopian Somalis crossing the border into Somalia, where most settled for the next decade. In 1988, civil war erupted in Somalia (this is commonly referred to as '8-8'), and approximately half a million refugees from Somalia crossed into Ethiopia, where they were accommodated in refugee camps (Aware camps) run by international humanitarian agencies. After the fall of Siyad Barre and the collapse of the Somalia state in 1991, most of the one million Ethiopian Somali refugees (from the 1977–8 war) returned from Somalia and were assimilated into Somali Region. Some joined refugees from Somalia's civil war, including a new wave from southern Somalia in 1991, in the refugee camps, but the majority rebuilt their livelihoods remarkably quickly, even though many arrived with few assets. 'We were a big family in Somalia. We had a good standard of living. Then, the [civil] war came, and we were made refugees. Before we came here, soldiers destroyed our houses. We came here with empty hands.'[67]

A more recent source of internal displacement within Ethiopia was a referendum in October 2004 over the border between Somali and Oromiya Regions, which caused tens

67 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

of thousands of Oromos and Somalis to move or be driven out of their communities. Apart from some immediate emergency assistance, little support has been provided to these people, many of whom have lost their homes, land, livestock and other property, and are now living in informal IDP camps in both regions.

International geopolitics have always impinged directly and significantly on livelihoods in the Horn of Africa, even in rural Somali Region. In August 2003, the government of Djibouti expelled over 100,000 foreign residents (labelled as "illegal immigrants"), allegedly at the instigation of the USA as part of its "War on Terror". One middle-aged man interviewed in Kebribayah was directly affected by this decree. He was working as a security guard in Djibouti but was abruptly deported and forced to return to his village in Kebribayah and take up farming. Since "9/11", there has been a permanent and highly visible US military presence in Somali Region, with two complementary objectives: "winning hearts and minds" by building schools and digging wells for local communities, and monitoring radical Islamic movements ('They are hunting Al Qaeda').

Another source of conflict and insecurity with an overtly political dimension is the long-running campaign by the ONLF for greater autonomy for the Ogaden. There are regular skirmishes between ONLF militia and the state security services, with deaths on both sides. In some ONLF-controlled areas, communities have tried to expel ONLF fighters, complaining that their presence is preventing the delivery of public services and inhibiting private investment. In Shilabo town, tensions between the ONLF and the local community have resulted in the deaths of several Ethiopian soldiers, ONLF fighters and residents of the town (Box 10.1). During our fieldwork in early 2005, these communities felt strongly that the government should engage the ONLF in negotiations to resolve their differences, as the impasse is affecting their livelihoods and the general development of Somali Region.[68] In fact, the Government of Ethiopia took steps towards negotiating a ceasefire with the ONLF in late 2005.

Most of the violent and "latent" conflicts within the region are not political in the larger sense, but occur between or within clans and concern access to productive resources, especially water and land – pasture for grazing, arable land for farming (Gebre-Mariam 2005). Conflict is often seen as endemic to pastoralist communities, partly because productive resources are scarce and because, as a consequence, people move continually in search of water and grazing for their livestock. With legally formalised property rights over these resources either absent or weakly defined, the boundaries between clan territories are often contested and when two groups converge on the same water point or pasture, conflict often follows. However, it would not be correct to conclude that pastoralist areas like Somali Region are "lawless" and anarchic. In fact, an elaborate system of property rights or resource allocation mechanisms exists, and traditional conflict resolution institutions and compensation procedures are widely accepted and effectively implemented. These mechanisms and institutions are not sufficient, however, to prevent all conflicts from escalating into violence.

Disputed territory (e.g. a water point, pasture or farmland) often becomes inaccessible to both parties involved in the dispute until it is resolved – which can take years. One direct impact is to take these resources out of the production system for the duration of the dispute, which is a significant loss in a region where natural resources are already scarce. An indirect impact is to disrupt mobility – one of the most fundamental characteristics of pastoralist livelihoods – so that people, livestock and commodities cannot move through these areas because of *aabsi*, or fear of confrontation. Pastoralists have to use different pasture or water points elsewhere, new migration routes must be established, or traders might need to find a circuitous route to avoid the disputed territory. All of these

68 One minor but significant consequence of ONLF activity is that fieldwork for our survey had to avoid parts of Somali Region that are known to be highly militarised and potentially dangerous. Even so, the fieldwork teams were stopped and questioned by armed militia and Ethiopian soldiers on several occasions. In such an environment, delivery of normal government services becomes impossible. Even NGOs with negotiated access face security risks and occasional loss of life.

Box 10.1 **Conflict in Shilabo District, 1998–2005**

Balisha 2005: Two Ogadeni sub-clans claimed control of Balisha *kebele* and ownership of Balisha's wells. One sub-clan set fire to a farm belonging to the other, and physically assaulted two of their men. At the time of our fieldwork, the situation remained tense, with rumours that both sides were arming themselves. Clan and religious leaders were trying to intervene to prevent lives being lost.

Bi'idyahan–Makahil conflict, 2003: Two clans went to war over control of the Ogadeni village of Gohweyne. The Ismail, a sub-sub-clan of the Ogadeni Makahil clan, had lived in Gohweyne for 100 years, while the Bi'idyahan, a subsection of the Majartein clan, claimed Gohweyne as their ancestral land, and tried to construct *berkad* in the area. Both parties obtained arms from relatives in Somalia and waged war on each other. The Makahil had 128 men killed and 173 injured, while the Bi'idyahan lost 152 lives and had 190 injured. The Bi'idyahan won the war and displaced the Makahil, who fled to Warder District.

Labobari 2001: Conflict erupted between three clan groups over control for Labobari *kebele* and its water wells and pastureland. One of the three groups procured arms from Somalia and defeated the other two, displacing them out of the *kebele*. Many lives were lost and many were left destitute. This dispute was resolved by armed conflict with no intervention from other clans or the Government of Ethiopian, either to provoke the violence or to prevent it.

Godle 2001: The people of Godle felt that the presence of ONLF fighters in their community was undermining their relationship with the government, and decided to disown the ONLF. When the ONLF refused to leave the area, the community killed three ONLF fighters.

Qamuda 2000: There was a local skirmish between the state and the ONLF when three young men who were accused of working for the ONLF were killed.

Shilabo 1999: Two Ethiopian government soldiers were killed by the ONLF in Shilabo town, and the government retaliated by gunning down four people from a local Ogaden sub-clan.

Jaleelo 1998: A vehicle transporting *khat* was attacked by members of a different clan who intended stealing the *khat*. In retaliation, the *khat* trader's clan killed two relatives of the thieves. This conflict was resolved by the elders who found the *khat* trader's clan guilty and fined them blood money.

Source: Key informant interviews, Shilabo District.

adaptations impose additional transactions costs on economic activities. If it takes traders and middlemen longer to bring commodities to local communities and to take livestock to the market, for instance, their operating costs will be higher. For example, fighting between the Bi'idyahan and Makahil in 2003 (Box 10.1) not only cost an estimated 280 lives, it was also very damaging to local livelihoods, as the disputed area which sparked the conflict lies on the main trading route from Shilabo to Bosaso, so this route became dangerous and inaccessible for several months. Some trucks that did attempt to transport livestock to Bosaso were attacked and the animals were seized or killed.

Conflict also has the significant indirect impact of constraining access to productive resources. In Doboweyn District, a low-level or latent conflict has been ongoing for four years between two Ogadeni sub-clans, concerning an area of land that is sometimes farmed and sometimes left fallow. In 2001 this area received enough rain for crop cultivation, and both sub-clans claimed the right to farm it. An international NGO (International Committee of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies) offered to provide farm tools to local people, which unintentionally escalated the tension, as each side feared that the other would seize this opportunity to settle and farm the land permanently. In order to avert a conflict – both parties being heavily equipped with small arms – the local government intervened and asked

both sub-clans to refrain from farming the land. Despite being a valuable resource for local livelihoods, this land has remained unutilised ever since. The local community is frustrated by the failure of the government to resolve this stand-off, complaining that local and regional officials appear to have no interest in finding a durable solution.

Conflict can also occur around access to externally provided resource transfers. A case in point relates to problems associated with food aid targeting during the 2004 drought. In one community in Kebribayah where "community targeting" was applied – i.e. community representatives were asked to identify deserving beneficiaries – we were told that one person was killed. ('The conflict arose because of food aid. When the drought was unbearable and people were very hungry, they started fighting each other for the food that was being brought to the community.')

In parts of Somali Region that are especially insecure, communities are exposed to conflict of different kinds. In the case of Shilabo District alone, seven serious incidents of violent conflict were reported as having occurred within the past seven years (Box 10.1). In the same district, tension is building around control and exploitation of the Calub natural gas deposits – reputedly one of the largest in the world, but unexploited to date, due mainly to security concerns. This is a major potential flash-point for future conflict, both within the local communities and between local people, the Ethiopian government and multinational businesses. An elder in Shilabo commented that there have been no discussions with local communities about the division of future revenue streams from this resource between local, national and international interests.

> We see foreign companies come and go, and the government is maintaining a large army here. No one tells the community what is going on, let alone consulting them. The ONLF and others fear that the Federal authorities want to exploit this resource for the benefit of non-Somalis, and this is unacceptable. First of all, we believe this land is ours. If we are not consulted on how it will be used, then it better remains unexploited. However, if we are consulted and given a fair share, we shall defend this land even against the Americans!

10.2 Impacts of conflict[69]

Most households in this survey claimed that their livelihoods have not been affected by conflict at all in recent years (n=1,003/1,093 =91.8 per cent), while a small number said conflict has affected them but not very seriously (n=32 =2.9 per cent), and one respondent in 20 said conflict has affected their livelihoods 'quite seriously' or 'very seriously' (n=58 =5.3 per cent). (Table 10.1). This is a relatively small number but it is significant, especially when disaggregated to the district level, given that conflict and insecurity appear to be concentrated in certain areas.[70] Almost one-third of households in Doboweyn (31 per cent) reported that their livelihoods have been seriously affected by conflict, while livelihoods have been disrupted, either mildly or seriously, in one household in four in Shilabo (26 per cent) and one household in five in Kebribayah (19 per cent).

As an indicator of how conflict can impact directly on lives, respondents were also asked if any member of their family has been injured or lost their life due to conflict. A total of 47 conflict-related deaths was recorded, 21 of which occurred in our 100 Doboweyn

69 The section on conflict in the household questionnaire included the following questions: 'Since the fall of Mengistu in 1991, how has conflict affected your family's livelihood?'; 'Has any member of your family been injured, or lost their life, due to conflict?'; 'The last time there was conflict that affected your family or interfered with your livelihood, who was involved in the conflict?'

70 It is important to note that our sampling frame was restricted to parts of Somali Region that were considered relatively stable at the time of the survey (so as not to put our fieldwork teams at risk), so that Fiq Zone, for instance, was excluded. This implies that the qualitative and quantitative findings on conflict, as reported in this chapter, understate the true extent and impacts of conflict and insecurity in Somali Region as a whole.

Table 10.1 **Households affected by conflict in Somali Region, by district**

District	*Impact on livelihoods* None (%)	Minor (%)	Serious (%)	*Impact on lives* Relative injured (%)	Relative killed (%)
Pastoralist	**90**	**4**	**6**	**6**	**4**
Gashamo	96	2	2	0	3
Shinile	100	0	0	0	0
Shilabo	74	9	17	19	9
Agro-pastoral	**82**	**7**	**11**	**7**	**11**
Kebribayah	81	18	1	4	9
Doboweyn	68	1	31	13	21
Cherati	96	2	2	5	2
Farmer	**98**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**1**
Jigjiga rural	100	0	0	0	0
Kelafo	94	0	6	3	3
Dolo Odo	100	0	0	0	0
Urban	**100**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Jigjiga town	100	0	0	0	0
Gode town	100	0	0	0	0
Average	**92**	**3**	**5**	**4**	**4**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,093).

households, followed by nine deaths in Shilabo and nine in Kebribayah. Doboweyn and Shilabo also reported the highest numbers of family members injured during conflicts (13 and 19 respectively). Once again, this amounts to only 4 per cent of households being affected across the 1,100 households interviewed, but with a heavy concentration in a few districts. Across livelihood categories, agro-pastoralist areas appear to suffer most from instability and conflict, accounting for two-thirds of conflict-related deaths. In two of the three farming districts – Dolo Odo and rural Jigjiga – by contrast, no conflict impacts were recorded at all. This was also the case in the urban centres of Jigjiga and Gode.

When asked which actors were involved in the most recent conflict that affected the respondents, the most common answer was 'conflict between our clan and another clan' (n=139/195 =71.3 per cent). After inter-clan conflict, conflict between militias and the clan came a distant second (8.7 per cent). All responses that mentioned militias came from households in Shilabo District. Intra-clan conflicts (between sections or sub-clans) ranked third (5.1 per cent). When asked who benefited most from that most recent conflict, politicians and government officials were named by three respondents in four (n=152/199=76.3 per cent), followed by militias (13.6 per cent), then clan elders (8.5 per cent).

Almost one in four households (n=198/870 =23 per cent) stated that they had lost access to farmland that used to belong to them, or grazing land that they used to use, because of conflict. This consequence was felt most severely in Doboweyn (61/100 households), rural Jigjiga (39), Kebribayah (35) and Shilabo (34). Asked why they were no longer using land they had lost, most affected farmers replied that it had been taken over and was being farmed by other people now. In a few cases, land that is disputed was being left unfarmed by either party, pending a resolution of the dispute. In Kebribayah, some land that was formerly used for grazing has been settled and is now being cultivated by agro-pastoralists. Also in Kebribayah, several respondents told us that they no longer use certain migration routes and pastures because of *aabsi* – the risk of conflict with other groups that are contesting access to the same grazing land. 'We don't go there for fear of being killed, since the land has been taken by another clan.'

Table 10.2 **Impacts of conflict in Somali Region, by district**

District	Loss of grazing or farmland (%)	Loss of access to water points (%)	Loss of livestock (%)	Relative injured (%)	Relative killed (%)
Pastoralist	**13**	**7**	**7**	**6**	**4**
Gashamo	4	0	2	0	3
Shinile	0	0	0	0	0
Shilabo	34	22	18	19	9
Agro-pastoral	**34**	**29**	**12**	**7**	**11**
Kebribayah	35	31	2	4	9
Doboweyn	61	54	31	13	21
Cherati	6	3	4	5	2
Farmer	**19**	**13**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Jigjiga rural	39	28	0	0	0
Kelafo	19	12	3	3	3
Dolo Odo	0	0	0	0	0
Urban	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Jigjiga town	0	0	0	0	0
Gode town	0	0	0	0	0
Average	**23**	**15**	**5**	**4**	**4**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

A similar pattern was recorded for loss of access to water points, especially *berkad* and wells, for livestock or domestic use. The same districts were affected as those that had lost access to land, to a slightly lesser extent. Once again, agro-pastoralists in Doboweyn appear to have been worst affected. The same reasons were given as for land: typically the water point has been "taken" by a rival clan who denies access to our survey households, and they fear that conflict will break out if they try to use that water point now. In some cases, *berkad* and wells that were previously open access have been fenced off and "privatised" – either people have to pay to water their livestock there, or access is restricted for the exclusive use of the owner and his relatives.

Several households have lost physical property due to conflict. Eight households in Shilabo and nine in Kebribayah reported that assets belonging to them had been stolen by rival groups during episodes of violent conflict. Two farming households in Kebribayah and Kelafo claimed that their granaries had been raided or destroyed during a conflict, and they had lost their cereal stocks. Most significantly, though, almost one-third of households interviewed in Doboweyn, and one in five in Shilabo, have lost livestock. Usually the numbers of animals involved were small (fewer than 10 head, in 46 out of 59 cases), but in some households in Doboweyn the respondent reported losing over 50 head of sheep and goats. This finding is consistent with evidence from localised conflicts between pastoralist groups elsewhere in Africa, where owners of large herds or flocks are specifically targeted and their animals seized during raids or attacks on the community (Deng 2003). In this sense, conflict can make households with more assets more vulnerable, not less. This is a distinctive feature of conflict-related vulnerability, since livelihood vulnerability is usually assumed to be inversely related to wealth (i.e. vulnerability falls as asset ownership increases).

Table 10.3 **Institutions for conflict resolution, by district**

District	Elders (%)	Police (%)	*Gurti* (%)	District administration (%)	Family (%)	Militia (%)
Pastoralist	**85**	**6**	**6**	**1**	**2**	**0**
Gashamo	92	0	0	2	5	1
Shinile	80	0	16	2	2	0
Shilabo	81	17	3	0	0	0
Agro-pastoral	**96**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Kebribayah	99	0	0	1	0	0
Doboweyn	92	0	8	0	0	0
Cherati	97	0	1	1	1	0
Farmer	**84**	**3**	**8**	**3**	**1**	**1**
Jigjiga rural	77	2	20	1	0	0
Kelafo	88	2	2	8	0	0
Dolo Odo	96	0	2	0	2	0
Urban	**41**	**53**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**
Jigjiga town	40	54	0	3	1	2
Gode town	43	52	3	1	1	1
Average	**79**	**13**	**5**	**2**	**1**	**0**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,093).

10.3 Conflict resolution

The household survey questionnaire asked respondents to identify the primary institutions involved in resolving disputes that affect themselves or their community. ('Who do you turn to in cases of conflict or trouble, to solve the problem?') There was a clear rural–urban divide in responses to this question. In rural areas, the elders are overwhelmingly preferred (over 80 per cent of cases) (Table 10.3). In two districts, a significant minority turn first to the *Gurti*, and in Shilabo – which (as we have seen) has been the location for much conflict and instability in recent years – the police were mentioned by one in six households. In only one district, Kelafo, was the District Administration given credit by more than one or two households as an institution that can step in to solve problems.

In both the urban centres of Jigjiga and Gode, by contrast, the police were named by more than half the respondents as the primary institution for conflict resolution, with the elders relegated to second place. This suggests that a shift is occurring in urban areas, from "traditional" to "modern" institutions for conflict resolution. Alternatively, this could be interpreted as a transition from resolving interpersonal disputes through the community's own internal mechanisms, to delegating that responsibility to the agents of the state. It is also plausible that the nature of conflict between people is rather different in towns, being dominated by petty crime such as theft and assault. In such cases, the appropriate authority to intervene and provide justice is increasingly seen as the police, rather than the clan. In rural areas, where conflicts are more likely to arise over disputed access to water and grazing, these are issues of inter-clan territoriality and the elders are still regarded as the people who should sit together and negotiate a solution.

10.4 Compensation payments

Conflict imposes a variety of costs on affected households, including death or injury of family members, loss of livestock and property, and restricted access to grazing land and

Table 10.4 **Compensation payments, by district**

District	Paid	Received	Paid cash	Paid livestock	Received cash	Received livestock
Pastoralist	**17%**	**8%**	**17**	**26**	**18**	**6**
Gashamo	2	0	0	0	0	0
Shinile	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shilabo	49	23	17	26	18	6
Agro-pastoral	**29%**	**3%**	**10**	**51**	**0**	**3**
Kebribayah	27	3	6	21	0	0
Doboweyn	58	7	4	30	0	3
Cherati	2	0	0	0	0	0
Farmer	*5%*	*4%*	*1*	*13*	*3*	*8*
Jigjiga rural	0	1	0	1	0	1
Kelafo	14	10	1	12	3	7
Dolo Odo	1	0	0	0	0	0
Urban	**0%**	**0%**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Jigjiga town	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gode town	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	**13 %**	**4 %**	**29**	**90**	**21**	**17**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,086).

water points. For those who are deemed to be responsible for the conflict, a further cost is the compensation that they are required to pay to the other party involved.

Qaadhaan is an effective "risk-pooling" mechanism. According to Somali customary law (*Xeer*), for instance, if a member of one clan or sub-clan kills a member of another, 100 camels must be paid as compensation if the victim was male and 50 camels if she was female. When compensation is due to be paid, the elders decide on the share to be contributed by each family in the paying clan or sub-clan, which divides the cost among many families. When the compensation is paid, half goes to the victim's household (analogous to the paying out of life insurance) and the other half goes to the clan (it is retained by the elders). In practice, however, compensation is rarely paid immediately or in full. Instead, the offending clan makes a nominal payment to acknowledge their culpability – if they do not make this gesture, tensions can escalate to full-scale conflict – and the balance is a debt that is known to both parties but is paid slowly, in instalments, or reduced if the other clan offends against the debtor clan.

A total of 154 households in our survey (14.2 per cent) reported having paid compensation to other families or clans because of conflict. Most of these households live in just two of our 11 districts – Doboweyn (58) and Shilabo (49). Significant numbers of households had also paid compensation in Kebribayah (27) and Kelafo (14). Fewer households had received compensation from others (n=44/1,086 =4.1 per cent). Interestingly, most of these households were concentrated in the same communities – although the numbers are less, almost all the households either paying and/or receiving compensation live in the same four districts (Table 10.4).

Typically, compensation paid from one clan or sub-clan to another is shared among all members of the paying group (*Dia*). In the 29 households that paid compensation in the form of cash, their share (*hagaag*) averaged 224 Birr, ranging from a minimum of 100 Birr to a maximum of 1,063 Birr. Compensation in the form of livestock was paid mainly in cattle (49 households, usually one cow each, but eight cows in one case from Kelafo). In 26 cases (21 from Shilabo), compensation was paid in camels (one–three camels per household).

Table 10.5 **Relationships with neighbouring groups, by district**

District	Good (%)	Stable (%)	Tense (%)	Conflict (%)	Stability index
Pastoralist	**84**	**9**	**6**	**1**	**0.08**
Gashamo	91	9	0	0	0.03
Shinile	99	0	0	1	0.01
Shilabo	60	20	18	2	0.21
Agro-pastoral	**69**	**11**	**17**	**3**	**0.18**
Kebribayah	75	5	16	4	0.16
Doboweyn	36	24	34	6	0.37
Cherati	96	2	2	0	0.02
Farmer	**93**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**0.03**
Jigjiga rural	91	7	1	0	0.03
Kelafo	90	1	7	2	0.07
Dolo Odo	99	1	0	0	0.00
Urban	**98**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0.02**
Jigjiga town	94	3	0	3	0.04
Gode town	100	0	0	0	0.00
Average	**85**	**7**	**7**	**2**	**0.09**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,099).

In 15 cases, sheep and goats were paid (one–five per household). Compensation received by households surveyed was also in the form of cash and/or livestock, and to approximately the same value.

Several cases of compensation payment were recorded in our fieldwork. In one case, a man from Kebribayah bought *khat* from another, but there was a disagreement over the price to be paid, and one man stabbed and killed the other. Blood money was asked for, even though the two men were related to each other. One household we interviewed from the affected community did not know the total compensation that was due to be paid, but he had personally contributed one cow towards the blood money.

10.5 Vulnerability to conflict

As a proxy indicator of how vulnerable communities might be to conflict breaking out in the near future, the household survey asked respondents to describe their relationship with neighbouring groups at the time of the interview. Responses were clustered into four categories: 'good', 'stable', 'tense', or 'conflict'. Encouragingly, relationships were described as 'good' by over 90 per cent of respondents in 8 out of 11 districts. In Doboweyn, Shilabo and Kebribayah, however, relations with neighbours were described as 'tense' by significant numbers of respondents, and in a few cases even as open 'conflict' (Table 10.5).[71] The situation in Doboweyn appears to be most tense and should give cause for concern. As was seen above, there is a great deal of latent and overt conflict in Shilabo District. As will be seen below, Shilabo and Doboweyn are also the two districts where local people are most disillusioned with government.[72]

71 This simple question ('How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring groups at this time: good, stable, tense, or conflict?') generates useful information and could be incorporated into a rapid "conflict early warning system".

72 Again, note that highly insecure parts of Somali Region were not included in our sampling frame, so the true extent of instability and conflict in the region is under-represented in this analysis.

A simple stability index was constructed that summarises the responses for each district into a single score between 0 (complete stability – all relationships 'good') and 1 (complete instability – all responses 'conflict'). Where the index value is 0, this district can be described as 'stable', with no evidence of either overt or latent instability. This is the case for only two sub-samples in our survey – Gode town, and Dolo Odo, a riverine farming community in southern Somali Region. In six district sub-samples, the stability index value lies between 0 and 0.1, suggesting a limited degree of instability that is mostly latent at present, but could deteriorate into open conflict in the future. Districts with index values above 0.1 are Doboweyn (0.37), Shilabo (0.21) and Kebribayah (0.16) (Table 10.5). In these places, conflict is either overt or is simmering and could erupt at any time. Note that this is a snapshot of the situation at a particular moment. Given the dynamic and unpredictable nature of conflict in this region, the situation could (and does) change from one week to the next, as tension builds, explodes or subsides in different communities over time.

Generalising across livelihood categories, agro-pastoralist communities emerge as apparently most unstable or vulnerable to conflict in terms of our index, followed by pastoralist areas. Sedentary farmers and urban residents are least affected by conflict, or the threat of conflict, in our sample. This finding could have been predicted, given that the source of much conflict in arid and semi-arid lowlands across the world is competition over scarce natural resources among people who are either moving with their livestock in search of water and grazing, or claiming a plot to farm where arable land is scarce, and where no private ownership or use rights have been established over these common property resources. However, it is important to avoid drawing an overly deterministic association between livelihood systems and susceptibility to conflict. There is great variability across communities pursuing similar livelihoods – the stability index reveals that one of the three agro-pastoralist districts, and two of the three pastoralist districts, are extremely peaceful. Many complex and context-specific factors – environmental, political, socio-cultural – affect whether any particular community will be peaceful or conflict-prone at any point in time.

Note also that evidence of conflict is not an argument for "privatising" rights to land, water and other natural resources in Somali Region. "Negotiated access" property regimes are a rational response to the harsh and unpredictable environment in which pastoralists and agro-pastoralists make their living, and mobility is an essential component of their livelihood strategies. Any intervention that restricts the physical mobility of people and animals, such as fencing farmland or pastures, or individualising ownership of water points, reduces freedom of movement and raises the livelihood risks that pastoralists face.

11 Governance and political representation

This chapter considers the roles and effectiveness of key governance structures and institutions in Somali Region, including the regional government and the regional *Gurti*, an adaptation of a Somali institution that facilitates communication and negotiation between representatives of clans. Selected policy processes, notably decentralisation and the 2005 national and regional elections, are also briefly discussed. We then present evidence from our household survey on perceptions of the fairness and effectiveness of government representation, at local, regional and national levels.

11.1 Political structures and policy processes

The Somali National Regional State (SNRS) is a product of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government's policy of "ethnic federalism", which assigned the major ethnic groups in Ethiopia to nine regional administrations corresponding to major language groups. The intention was to eradicate the domination of one ethnic group over all others, though critics have argued that ethnic divisions and polarisation may have increased as a result of the hardening of ethnic identities.

The relationship between the Ethiopian state and traditional political structures in Somali Region is delicately balanced, and constantly evolving. Rather than being two distinct systems, either performing complementary functions or competing against each other for authority over citizens, representatives of the state and the clans intersect and interrelate in complex ways. While the state holds nominal power and controls most of the public resources disbursed at regional level, respondents describe how the elders and other traditional leaders also continue to exert considerable power. At regional level, elders and elites work in concert with the state, and at local level, where government administrators are thin on the ground, most decisions are made by traditional leaders. These leaders are often employed by and also advise the state, while many bureaucrats and politicians in the regional government are also pastoralists or traders, with strong affiliations to particular clans and rural communities. Tensions created by these multiple roles infuse political life in Somali Region. Members of government point to the energetic efforts towards reform and improvement of political and administrative systems.

The main political and administrative representative of the federal state in Somali Region is the regional government, based in Jigjiga town, which includes the Regional Parliament and the Regional Administration. At the time of the survey, respondents, particularly in rural areas, claimed that the regional government had not yet managed to deliver much in the way of "development" to Somali Region. Most respondents said that there had been no discernible improvement in the provision of social services or physical infrastructure. In Jigjiga District, elders noted that there were some infrastructural improvements. Respondents were concerned that government interventions to prevent conflicts or mediate in long-running disputes usually had only short-lived success, and there was widespread criticism of the government's performance on livelihood-related issues (such as the Saudi livestock import ban and the "war on contraband"). People generally perceive the regional government as being embroiled in politics rather than "serving the people", who are rarely consulted about decisions taken on their behalf. Elders see regional bureaucrats as being mainly young and inexperienced, describing them as "small boys" or "black hairs" (rather than "white hairs" like themselves).

The regional budget is always fiercely contested and often underspent, and in some years funds allocated to the region have been returned to Addis Ababa. Observers of the political scene in Somali Region note that the Regional President and most members of the Regional Cabinet rarely stay in their posts for too long before being removed — and replaced with other officials who, in turn, are replaced one or two years later. This high and repetitive turnover of high-level politicians and bureaucrats is both a cause and a consequence of failures of accountability at the regional level. A unique form of "neo-patrimonialism"[73] dominates politics in Somali Region. Rather than representing the interests of Somali Region as a whole, people who are elected or appointed to positions of power tend to exercise that power to benefit the interests of the group that installed them in their post. Clans with members in positions of power and influence expect those individuals to direct resources (public spending, food aid, jobs and contracts) towards the interests of the clan, rather than to the region as a whole. Knowing that their time in power might be short-lived, these individuals necessarily have to have a short time horizon and a narrow vision of what they hope to achieve. (Hagmann 2005). Whether they are personally corrupt or not is beside the point – the consequence is a distorted policy process. Political processes that lack effective means of regulating competition for scarce resources and of keeping the civil service separate from patronage are unlikely to achieve broader developmental objectives (such as the provision of effective public services) and sustainable development outcomes. Even if power is (unofficially) rotated between the dominant clans, the interests of marginalised clans and powerless groups (e.g. the "Bantu Somalis" of Kelafo) are not adequately represented by this political arrangement. This situation is widely recognised

73 "Neo-patrimonialism" is a term that describes political regimes in which the collective interests of society as a whole are subordinated to the much narrower interests of people in power and their patrons and clients. (See Chabal and Daloz (1999) and van de Walle (2001), for detailed analyses of neo-patrimonialism and clientelism in various African states).

within the regional government and the government is discussing reforms that have the potential to address these fundamental issues.

One institution that should assist marginalised clans to overcome their exclusion is the *Gurti*. A *Gurti* is a traditional Somali institution that brings together representatives of different clans (or sub-clans within a single clan) as a forum for discussion and negotiation over issues of mutual concern, such as establishing territorial boundaries or mediating in conflicts. In 1999 the regional government created a regional *Gurti*, comprising regional and zonal elders elected by 700 clan elders and religious leaders (*sultans* and *Ugaz*) and representing all major clans and sub-clans throughout Somali Region. Its members are paid a salary by the regional government. This high-level *Gurti* serves as a formal council of traditional leaders, with whom the regional president and government can consult on major issues and decisions.

As a hybrid adaptation of a traditional institution, the regional *Gurti* occupies an ambiguous political position in Somali Region. It was created with a view to incorporating the traditional governance system into the modern one, but the process has not yet reached a stage where the institution's responsibilities and powers have been clarified and codified. *Gurti* members say they are only occasionally called upon, usually to provide short-term conflict resolution services, but have few formal powers in government. Some feel frustrated that the *Gurti* is not given more opportunity to provide more leadership in the region. People outside Jigjiga town tend to see the *Gurti* members as losing authority in the community and being compromised by their close association with the difficulties of Jigjiga politics and administration.

A new element in the relationship between communities, their elected representatives and the state, is the ongoing policy of decentralisation. Government decentralisation in Ethiopia has been termed 'deconcentration' by the World Bank (2001) – the extension of state power from the centre to the periphery, to provide a more responsive and locally accountable administration. If and when local councillors and administrators succeed in mobilising resources to build schools and clinics, and to meet other locally articulated priorities, then decentralisation will benefit the people of Somali Region significantly. Survey respondents were concerned, however, that newly empowered local politicians might disrupt indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution, allocation of rights to land and water, or community-based natural resource management.

Federal and regional elections were held in Ethiopia on 15 May 2005, except in Somali Region where they took place in August. European Union monitors described the May elections as 'more transparent and efficient than ever before', but they raised concerns about 'the overall political environment in which the elections took place' (European Union 2005). Opposition parties made large gains. In some senses the setback that the EPRDF received in the May elections gave the government an unprecedented sense of accountability towards its citizens, and extensive talks were held between government and traditional leaders in Somali Region in the weeks leading up to the election. On the day before voter registration was due to begin, however, hand grenades were thrown into hotels and official residences in Jigjiga, Fiq and Degahbur, killing at least five people. The reasons for this action were unclear, but some blamed the ONLF, which denied the accusation. The elections which followed on 21 August were criticised by EU election observers, who alleged that ballots were being sold on the black market and that opposition activists were intimidated and arrested. Since the elections there have been further efforts by government to publicise its prioritising of pastoralist issues.

11.2 Perceptions of political representation

The household survey questionnaire asked respondents to comment on the fairness of their political representation and the effectiveness of their political representatives.[74] The percentages of respondents who answered in the affirmative – that they believe they are

74 'Do you feel that you are fairly and adequately represented in local/regional/federal government?' and 'Are your representatives effective in representing you at local/regional/federal government?'

Table 11.1 **Perceptions of fairness and effectiveness of government representation**

District	*Fairly represented*			*Effectively represented*			
	Local (%)	Regional (%)	Federal (%)	Local (%)	Regional (%)	Federal (%)	Average (%)
Pastoralist	**30**	**17**	**23**	**17**	**9**	**14**	**18.4**
Gashamo	62	32	58	19	6	19	32.6
Shinile	40	24	24	34	25	26	28.8
Shilabo	2	0	0	2	0	0	0.7
Agro-pastoral	**20**	**6**	**5**	**18**	**4**	**4**	**9.5**
Kebribayah	22	12	13	18	9	9	13.6
Doboweyn	4	1	0	4	0	0	1.6
Cherati	42	3	2	39	2	1	15.0
Farmer	**27**	**10**	**9**	**26**	**9**	**9**	**14.9**
Jigjiga rural	32	27	26	29	23	23	26.5
Kelafo	22	5	4	22	4	4	10.0
Dolo Odo	27	0	0	26	0	0	8.9
Urban	36	21	18	35	22	16	24.6
Jigjiga town	19	19	24	19	19	21	20.3
Gode town	59	23	12	56	24	12	30.9
Average	**27**	**12**	**13**	**23**	**9**	**10**	**15.8**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

fairly represented and adequately represented in government structures, at the local, regional and federal levels – are summarised in Table 11.1, by district. The general impression that this table conveys is that representation is inadequate at all levels. Across the six questions asked, the range of positive responses averages in the range of 9 per cent (the lowest result, for 'effective representation at the regional level') to 27 per cent (the highest response, for 'fair representation at the local level').

These are discouraging findings for government. They suggest that three-quarters of people in Somali Region feel disenfranchised (not fairly represented) and believe that government is not working effectively to serve their interests (ineffectively represented). There is better news for the process of decentralisation: for both 'fair' and 'effective' representation, positive responses for the local level were more than double those for the regional and federal levels. Significantly, although the regional and federal administrations were seen as almost equally ineffectual, the regional administration in Jigjiga received the worst approval ratings of all three levels of government.

It is important to note that there is substantial variability in perceptions across districts, with positive approval ratings (>50 per cent) recorded in a few cases – for local government in Gode town (both fairness and effectiveness), and for fairness of representation in rural Gashamo (at local and federal levels, but not regional). At the other extreme, 100 per cent disapproval ratings were recorded for both fairness and effectiveness of representation at regional and federal levels, in three districts: Shilabo, Doboweyn, and Dolo Odo (Table 11.1). There is no obvious connection between these three districts – Shilabo is a pastoralist area, Doboweyn is mainly agro-pastoral, and Dolo Odo is dominated by riverine farmers – except that Shilabo and Doboweyn are geographically contiguous districts in Korahe Zone. It is likely that these strong signals of disapproval from selected districts reflect locally specific concerns and issues. As noted earlier, for instance, the Bantu farmers of Dolo Odo feel politically marginalised because of their ethnicity. Also, Shilabo District has suffered from several incidents of violent conflict in recent years (as discussed above), which the government has not yet managed to resolve. The people of Shilabo are also suspicious of government intentions regarding local deposits of natural gas.

In discussions with communities during fieldwork, people expressed strong and generally critical views about their relationship and interactions with government. The following selection is typical of many comments made that suggest an absence of effective government in Somali Region.

> We do not know if we have representation. It seems no one is conveying our problems to the government.
>
> Nothing changes. Electing leaders is a waste of time.
>
> Government, government – what government are you talking about? We only see the army, if that's what you mean.
>
> No one talks to us to ask what we need. The government does not exist here.
>
> The government does nothing at all for us.

One elder in Kelafo District complained that successive regimes have marginalised the district, and Somali Region in general.[75] He argued that elected local representatives cannot have any positive impact, because they are effectively voiceless and quickly forget their roots in the rural constituencies: 'The elected representatives do not look back, they go and disappear in Jigjiga.' Asked whether decentralisation is making a difference, he replied that no basic services have yet been provided, so the local people can see no benefits from government at either the central or decentralised level: 'Decentralisation is a big propaganda – there has not been any positive outcome that helped us in any way.' Others recognised the potential for decentralisation to make a difference to local people, but identified serious shortcomings in its implementation.

> Decentralisation can be a good process, but there must be clear communication between the different levels. The District must pass messages to the regional government and then they must pass it onto the federal government. At the moment, decentralisation only means that we have these different levels, but not that there is any communication between the levels.[76]
>
> We can't only blame the government in Addis. Our own government in Jigjiga is there, and there is also our local government representatives in Gashamo, but they don't help us even though they are our own people. They aren't conveying our messages and needs to Jigjiga and the federal government.[77]

Another farmer in Kelafo District spoke for many others in his community when he expressed discontent about the lack of delivery of essential services, despite the promises of elections and decentralisation: 'If we can get anything at all from the government, we would like schools, health facilities and irrigation equipment. But we doubt that we shall ever get any of these. We have been forgotten.'[78]

Complaints about being "forgotten" and "invisible" to government were common: 'We are in the country but invisible to those who exercise ruling rights over us.' Alternatively, government was accused of being invisible to local people: 'We have not seen any government or NGO officials, in fact, this is the first time that someone has come to talk to us.' A more benign interpretation attributed the failure of the administration to deliver basic services to lack of government capacity: 'We think that even the government itself is as weak as us and cannot afford to assist.'[79]

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75 Key informant interview, male elder, Kelafo District.

76 Male focus group participant, Gashamo town.

77 Male focus group participant, Gashamo town.

78 Male focus group participant, Kelafo District.

79 Male focus group participant, Shinile District.

Another benign view, articulated by many respondents throughout rural Somali Region, is that their neglect in terms of basic services is related to their geographic isolation and political marginalisation within Ethiopia: 'We are forgotten here because we are so far from Addis, and so close to Somaliland.' Others in eastern Somali Region added that their proximity to Somaliland means that they receive more support from NGOs there than from the Ethiopian government.

> We have received more assistance from Somaliland than Ethiopia. We have received a veterinary centre; health centre; terracing; restocking of animals of people who have lost animals; prevention of soil erosion; repairing *berkad*. We have received none of these things from Addis – no schools, no health centre, nothing.[80]

Finally, participants in a women's focus group discussion in rural Gashamo complained that they are ignored by politicians, who talk only to men: 'We have MPs in Gashamo but they never come and meet with us. Either they only go to Gashamo town or else they talk to the men only.'[81]

12 Gendered vulnerability

Somali society is highly patriarchal, and females in any patriarchal society face gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities, or experience the effects of generic risks and vulnerabilities more acutely than do males. The most extreme outcome of gendered vulnerability is higher mortality rates for women and girls, and this chapter presents demographic evidence from the 1997 census for hundreds of thousands of "missing females" in Somali Region. Our household survey also finds that life expectancy is significantly lower for women than men. Explanations for this discrepancy are sought at the household level and in the labour market, where women face constrained employment options. On a positive note, there is evidence that women are gaining increasing autonomy, partly as a consequence of the recent sequence of droughts, where loss of livestock translates into loss of male power.

12.1 Gender bias in Somali Region

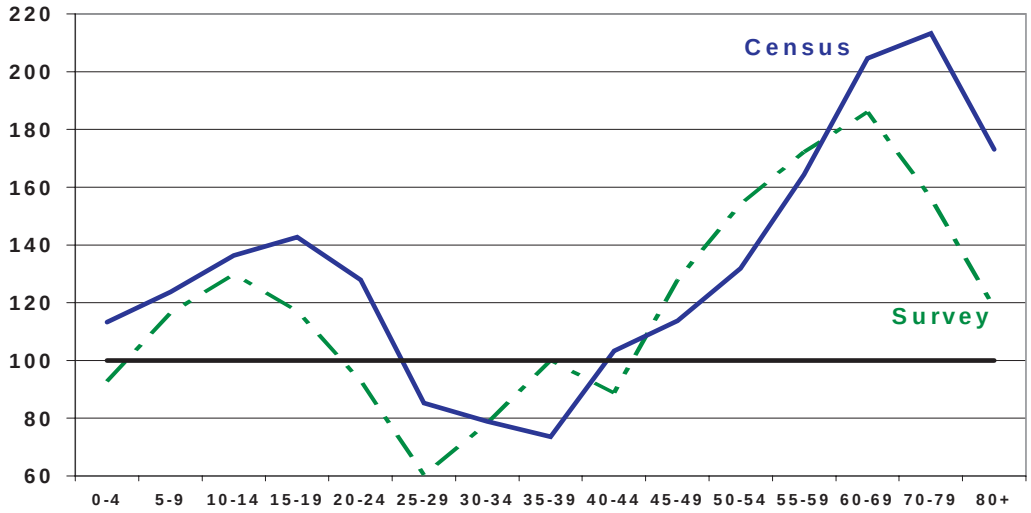
Although women in Ethiopia enjoy constitutional equality with men, they are under-represented at all levels of government – federal, regional and local. In Somali Region there is currently only one woman MP (there were previously two) in a Regional Parliament of over 160 MPs. In the Council of Elders, two women sit alongside 13 men – an innovation imposed on the *Gurti* from above. In January 2004, district elections in Somali Region returned 356 women out of 3,309 councillors elected (NEB 2004) – just 10.8 per cent. This is despite official instructions from the ruling party to select more women candidates, with a target of one-third female representation in regional parliaments and district councils. If women are not adequately represented in key institutions that exercise power, it is highly unlikely that their concerns will be reflected when decisions are taken (or not taken) that substantively affect their lives.

Given the fact that women have been artificially introduced into political fora in Somali Region, a related consideration is how effective these women MPs and *Gurti* members can be within such patriarchal institutions. The female *Gurti* members clearly do not regard themselves as fully equal members. One of them told us: 'We only listen, and try not to interfere with the proceedings of the elders on the *Gurti* committee.' It is unclear whether the women's deference reflects respect for the age and seniority of the male elders, nervousness at being outnumbered, and/or a feeling that they are intruding on a space that has traditionally been reserved for men. The paradox is that Somali women throughout the

80 Male focus group participant, Gashamo town.

81 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

Figure 12.1 **Sex ratios in Somali Region***



* Sex ratio = males per 100 females.

Horn of Africa have a reputation for being strong-willed and influential in many arenas – they are famous for mobilising their communities around political issues, and many women traders are wealthy and respected – yet they appear unable to break through into formal political leadership roles.

More disturbing evidence of the consequences of gender bias comes from the Somali Region Census of 1997. Disaggregating the population by sex and by age cohort reveals a distinctive pattern, with three components. In the child and adolescent cohorts (0–20 years old), males outnumber females. Among young adults (25–40 years old), however, there are more females than males. Among middle–aged and older people (all cohorts over years old), males once again outnumber females (Figure 12.1). It should be noted that the census in Somali Region was difficult and controversial, and had to be done twice. Some districts were not visited at all, for security reasons. Nonetheless, it is difficult to explain away this systematic pattern of sex ratios as methodological error or under-enumeration. For one thing, the distinctive pattern of the Census is mirrored in demographic data collected for this survey, which enumerated over 8,600 individuals living in 1,100 households and found an almost identical distribution by age–sex cohort.

The most skewed sex ratios occur in the older age groups. Among people over 60 years of age, the sex ratio peaks at 203, meaning that there are twice as many men over 60 as women. In relative terms, gender-biased demographic outcomes are most skewed against older women. In absolute numbers, however, since this is a very young population – 59 per cent of residents of Somali Region are under 20 years old – male bias affects younger age cohorts most, where the sex ratio averages 129 males per 100 females. The intriguing reversal that occurs in sex ratios among young adults is also found in both the census and our survey data. Among 25–40-year-olds, the sex ratio falls to 79 males per 100 females. There is no obvious explanation for this anomaly, but it might be related to gendered differences in mobility and migration: men in this age group who have the opportunity are quite likely to be travelling abroad. It is also possible that conflict-related deaths affect young adult men disproportionately, though this effect is unlikely to be large enough to produce such a dramatic demographic outcome.

Overall, these census and survey statistics suggest that there are large numbers of "missing females" in Somali Region. Simply adding up the number of "excess males" by age cohort in the census data reveals that there are some 300,000 "missing females" under 25 years of age, or 22 per cent fewer females than males. Conversely, in the 25–39-year-old cohort, women outnumbered men by 57,000 in 1997, though it is likely that most of these "missing men" are only temporary absentees from the region. Above the age of 40, however, sex ratios that peak at 2 to 1 mean that there are a further 65,000 "missing women" (Figure

Figure 12.2 **"Missing females" in Somali Region (1997 Census data)**

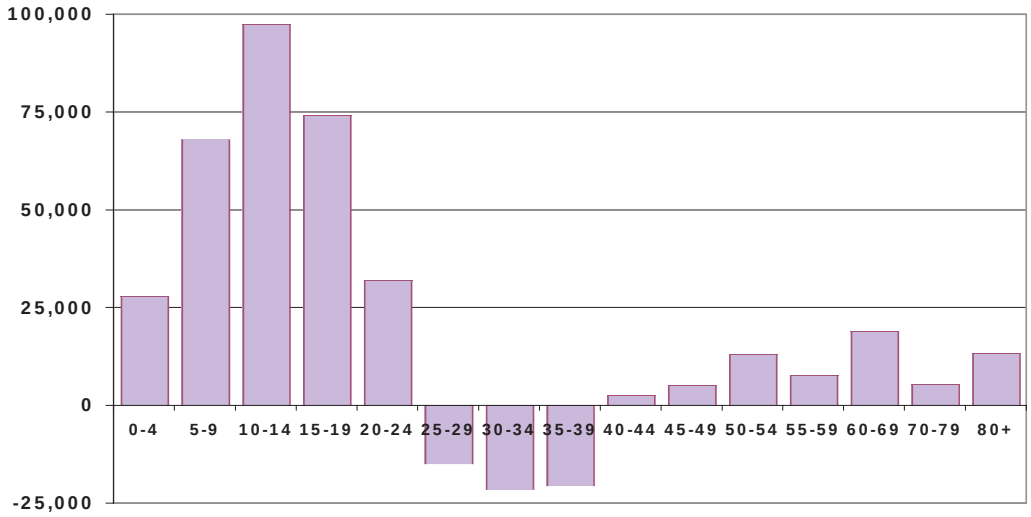
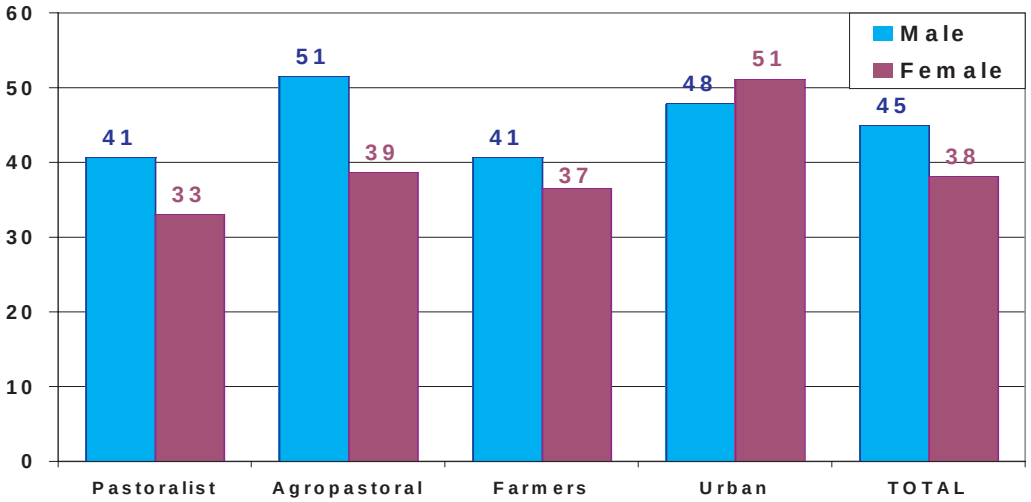


Figure 12.3 **Crude life expectancy estimates (household survey data)**



12.2). Most of these "excess males" reflect the fact that men live longer than women in Somali Region.

These gender disparities are also reflected in mortality rates. A baby boy born in Somali Region has a 22 per cent greater chance of surviving to the age of five than a baby girl. According to census data, life expectancy at birth is 56 years for males and 53 for females. As the census report concludes: 'life expectancy for males is higher than females, unlike the life expectancy of most other regions' (FDRE 1998). Our household survey questionnaire allowed crude estimates to be made of life expectancy based on self-reported mortality. These estimates (derived from a sample of 8,600 individuals) are less reliable than the calculations presented in the census report (derived from a regional population of 3.4 million), but they are indicative of relative trends across the survey population. Our survey data confirm that men outlive women in Somali Region (Figure 12.3). Moreover, gender differentials in life expectancy are greatest in pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households. The gap is less in farming households, and in urban households women actually have a higher life expectancy than men, suggesting that urban life is less harsh for women.

Box 12.1 **"Celebrating sons": intra-household discrimination in Somali Region**

Girl no. 1: 'In Somali culture, most mothers prefer to take care of their sons than their daughters. Most mothers prefer to have boy babies, so they take better care of them than their girl babies. When a boy is born, there is great celebration. This isn't the case when a girl is born.'

Girl no. 2: 'Most girl babies and children are thinner that the boys because their mothers don't treat them and feed them as well as the boys.'

Girl no. 3: 'In our home, my uncle and male cousins get the best food in the family. All the women just serve them, even though they are thinner than the men and deserve more food. Even among the children, my mother and aunts give the small boys better and more food than the girls.'

Girl no. 4: 'My mother gives my sisters herbs to drink when they are sick, but buys proper drugs for my brothers. I don't like it. I won't behave like that if I have children. I will treat them the same.'

Girl no. 5: 'When my brother gets sick, they take him immediately to the Health Centre or spend money buying tablets from the pharmacy. When my sister or me gets sick, they say: "she'll get better, it's not necessary to take her to the Health Centre".'

Girl no. 6: 'My mother is always taking my younger brother to the Health Centre and buying him drugs even when he only has a slight cough. But she never takes my small sister although she is a sickly child and my brother isn't.'

Source: Focus group discussion, female high school pupils, rural Gashamo District.

12.2 Intra-household discrimination

One plausible explanation for gender-biased well-being outcomes is intra-household behaviour that favours males at the expense of female family members. It is difficult to obtain rigorous and credible evidence on discriminatory behaviours, so here we report on qualitative findings from discussions with older children and young adults in Somali Region.

In a discussion with high school pupils in rural Gashamo District, many girls remarked that their parents display an overt male bias in several ways, including: (1) son preference in terms of fertility; (2) male bias in intra-household allocation of resources such as food; and (3) favouring sons with access to services such as health care and education. Many of these teenagers gave examples from their own family, and most confirmed that they had had the same experiences, especially when they were younger. Interestingly, these girls blamed their mothers as much as their fathers for neglecting themselves and their sisters (Box 12.1).

This evidence of internalisation of patriarchal values is not unique to Somali culture; in many other cultures women subordinate their own needs and those of female relatives to the needs of their husband and sons. The starkest outcome of these skewed gendered choices is that women and girls in Somali Region live shorter and less healthy lives than men and boys.

A large part of women's vulnerability in Somali Region derives from their limited control over key productive resources. 'We don't own anything. There is nothing that belongs to us women.'[82] This limited ownership of assets might explain why women have less of a stake in the pastoral economy – and are therefore more willing to contemplate a future outside pastoralism – than men, who own all the income-generating assets and derive most of the income from them. 'Even if a woman works hard and gets something, the man will be the owner. That's the problem of us Somalis: women aren't allowed to own anything.'[83]

82 Women's focus group, rural Gashamo.

83 Women's focus group, rural Gashamo.

Pastoralist women complain specifically about their restricted ownership of livestock, especially large stock, which in Somali culture are traditionally the property of men: 'Even if a woman owns animals before she gets married, when she gets married, the animals become her husband's property.'[84] This sex segregation in livestock ownership is changing, however. In farming communities, such as the "Bantu Somalis" along the Shabelle and Dawa/Ganale rivers, women do not own land in their own right. Tradition dictates that men control access to all land, which legally belongs to the state: 'I know of no woman who owns land in this village.'[85]

It is hardly surprising that Somali women feel undervalued – "the half of men": 'If a man is killed, his family have to be compensated with 100 camels. If a woman is killed, she is compensated with only 50 camels. So we are only treated as the half of men.'[86] On the other hand, women take a disproportionate role in domestic reproduction, while also being actively engaged in work that contributes to household food production and income generation. When we asked a group of women in a farming community to describe their main livelihood activities, they replied: 'Looking after the family, bringing up children, cooking, fetching water and working on the farm – cutting grass, weeding, cultivating, and helping with the harvest.'[87]

12.3 *Khat* consumption[88]

As everywhere in the world, financial problems are a common source of marital stress between husbands and wives. In Somali Region, where alcohol consumption is prohibited by the Muslim religion, chewing of *khat* is very prevalent among men – it is an almost exclusively male pastime. Excessive *khat* consumption is blamed for exacerbating many problems between couples, including money troubles. *Khat* was even mentioned as the main contributory cause to several recent divorces: 'I divorced my first husband after two children because he wasn't bringing in any money. He was just spending any money he had on *khat*.'[89] The intersection of drought and *khat* was blamed by women as undermining Somali culture and diminishing the social status, economic contribution and personal self-esteem of Somali men (Box 12.2).

While women lay the blame on men for becoming idle and squandering household resources on *khat*, men see their increasing consumption of *khat* as a symptom of other problems – a response to the depression induced by losing their animals to drought, feelings of guilt about being unable to support their families, loss of self-respect, being displaced to towns where they are effectively unemployed and idle, and susceptible to urban temptations such as *khat*-chewing (Box 12.3). Like alcohol in other cultures, *khat* is seen as a vice indulged in by unsettled young men, mainly in urban areas, who are uncertain about their futures and have too much time on their hands.

More generally, women see men as unable to adapt to changing circumstances, and living in the past, and relying on past glories: 'It should be better to say "I own one donkey today" than to say "My father owned 2000 camels". But instead, they rely on their past glories and spend time saying how wealthy they used to be.' By contrast, women see themselves as being more flexible and practical, and better able to live in the present: 'Women force themselves to adapt to changing circumstances."[90]

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84 Women's focus group, rural Gashamo.

85 Woman farmer, Dolo Odo District.

86 Woman's focus group, rural Gashamo.

87 Women's focus group participant, Kelafo District.

88 *Khat* (also spelt *Chat* or *Qat*) refers to the leaves of the tree *Catha Edulis*. It contains five active ingredients, the most active being cathine and cathonine. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has classified cathonine as a Schedule I drug (most restrictive), and cathine as a Schedule IV drug. Cathonine is only present in freshly picked leaves, but turns into cathine after 48 hours (Luqman and Danowski 1976). As a consequence, *khat* has to be consumed within hours of being picked. It cannot be stored or hoarded, necessitating a rapid distribution system.

89 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

90 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

Box 12.2 **"More important than food": women's attitudes to chewing *khat***

Woman no. 1: 'Men are different today than before. In the past, a man had lots of pride and believed he had to take care of his wife and children. Nowadays, men aren't as strong and proud as before. When they lose their animals, they come to town and just sit chewing *khat*. They don't care what happens to their children: they look to their wife to find a way of earning something. I blame *khat* and the many droughts for men's behaviour. We also used to have *khat* when I was young, but men knew how to use it then. These days men get frustrated because they lose their animals, and instead of doing anything useful, they just sit and chew.'

Woman no. 2: 'Women have worries too, but we don't chew *khat*. Women have to worry about the children; where the food is coming from, and so on. You can go to any tea-shop and you'll find men drinking tea and chewing *khat*. You'll find women busy, trying somehow to make a living. Men just don't care. If they have some small money, they'll use it for *khat* instead of food for their children.'

Woman no. 3: 'When men get a small amount of money, they spend it immediately on *khat*. When they come home at night, and the wife asks for money, and he says he hasn't any, it causes an argument between them because she know he has chosen to spend his money on *khat* instead of on his own children. They quarrel all the time until they divorce.'

Woman no. 4: 'There were many problems between me and my husband, but it was mainly because of money. He was also a *khat* seller like me, but he used to chew all his profits away or else give it free of charge to his friends and relatives. So there were always arguments between us. *Khat* seemed to be more important than his children and food for his family.'

Woman no. 5: 'Many women divorce because of *khat*. Before you used to hear of one or two such divorces, now it is more and more. Between us, in the last year, we've heard of about 13 women who divorced because of this reason. We've all heard rumours of others who are experiencing problems with their husbands chewing *khat* but haven't yet divorced.'

Source: Women's focus group discussion, rural Gashamo.

12.4 Gendered division of incomes

In a culture dominated by livestock rearing, Somali men who lose their animals often appear to be unable or unwilling to take up alternative income-generating opportunities. According to women, this is a matter of pride: Somali men are too proud and independent to adjust to the reality that they need to take up any opportunity to earn income, even if it's only "small money" and requires working for someone else. As one woman who runs a store in Gashamo town argued:

> The trouble with Somali men is that they don't see the value of earning a bit of money. Either they must earn big money or they just sit around not earning anything at all. Even when it comes to getting a job: most of them aren't interested in working for someone else. They all want to be employers, but nobody wants to be an employee. In every society, there must be some employers, some employees; some big traders, some small traders. But Somali men don't seem to be able to understand this.[91]

Many Somali men do not contradict this representation of themselves, instead seeing their pride and independence as a virtue of their culture: 'Other tribes are happy to do small-scale activities; but we are different. A Somali man feels humiliated, like he isn't a man if he

91 Female storeowner, Gashamo town.

Box 12.3 **"Trying to forget our worries": men's attitudes to chewing khat**

Man no. 1: 'It is frustration that causes us to chew like this. We are all proud men. We feel very bad that we aren't able to take care of our families, but we can't do anything because we only know this life and this work.'

Man no. 2: 'The problem is that we are trying to forget our worries. We aren't interested in doing women's work: we are pastoralists or big traders: that's what Somali men do.'

Man no. 3: It's mainly the young men that chew so much. When we were young, we knew *khat*, but we weren't chewing it like the young men now. When I go to Gashamo, I see many young men just sitting in the tea shops chewing *khat*.'

Man no. 4: 'When I've gone to towns, even Gashamo, I see most of the men chewing *khat* – more than men here. The reason for their behaviour is because they are not suited to live in towns and cities. We aren't meant to be settled and living in one place, and not moving with our animals.'

Source: Men's focus group discussion, rural Gashamo.

doesn't have a big herd or if he isn't earning a lot of money from a big business.'[92] One consequence of this attitude is that income-generating activities are implicitly stratified into high-status, high-return activities, which are reserved for men (these include livestock rearing and large-scale trading), and low-status, low-return activities, into which women are channelled disproportionately (e.g. petty trading, collecting firewood). One male pastoralist articulated this patriarchal view of "men's work" and "women's work" forcefully:

> I'm not interested in doing minor things like selling tea. That's okay for women to do. If I was interested in something in that line, it would have to be on a big scale like a hotel or restaurant. You will never find a Somali man doing petty trading! I would rather prefer to starve than humiliate myself by doing women's petty trading.[93]

To some extent these gendered divisions in the labour market are not as rigid as in many other societies, and they are breaking down, due to a combination of social pressure and economic stress. More women are involved in large-scale trading now, for instance, while more men than before are taking up petty activities like collecting firewood and burning charcoal. The assertion of male pride by some men is at variance with the reality that many others are doing whatever is necessary to support their families.

More generally, one area where women's lives have changed is in terms of earning independent income, which has increased in recent decades as a direct response to the crisis of pastoralist livelihoods. ('Until about 20 years ago, women weren't doing any work for cash. Women mainly started working for money because the of increasing droughts and the serious losses of animals that most households have suffered.') As household resources have dwindled or livestock herds have become more volatile, so women have taken more responsibility for bringing food and income into the home, a responsibility which was previously reserved for men. ('In the old days, women hardly earned an income – the man was supposed to take of everything. But now women are forced to do something. In the past, women weren't involved in money matters, not like now.')

Notwithstanding these changes, a focus group discussion in Gashamo town revealed that Somali women still complain about being under the control of men, at both the household and community levels: 'We can't do anything without the permission of men – our fathers, husbands, brothers and elders.' For instance, husbands sometimes try to prevent their wives from working outside the home: 'I know of some men who don't want their wives to do

92 Male pastoralist, rural Gashamo.

93 Male pastoralist, rural Gashamo.

any work. They want them to remain in the house because they don't like their wives to meet so many men in their shops and stalls.' On the other hand, these attitudes are not universal in Somali Region, and they are also changing: 'The drought has forced such men to change. If their wives don't do anything, the children will starve. So they are forced to give their permission for their wives to work.'[94]

Loss of (male-owned) livestock also translates directly into loss of male power, which women can and do exploit. Some women faced with recalcitrant husbands have successfully lobbied the elders to persuade their husbands to grant them economic independence, making the argument that allowing women to work is often the only way to keep families together. One woman told us of her success in changing the attitudes of the elders in her community:

> Because men are just sitting around chewing *khat*, they are losing some of their former power. I wanted to do some business, but my husband refused me permission. There was conflict between us, and I decided to go to the elders and explain my case. Because he wasn't working or bringing in anything, they persuaded him to let me work because I would make a contribution and prevent the family from becoming beggars. If he was bringing in money, they would not have been able to persuade him. The drought and loss of livestock has brought this change in the elders and the men.[95]

It follows that, paradoxically, droughts and other processes of impoverishment are enhancing women's status with respect to men. Another woman explained how the balance of power within her home has shifted away from husbands and towards wives:

> In my home, my husband is still the main decision-maker, but he has to consult me on all the important and big decisions. They have realised that we women are very smart and hard-working and that they are depending on us more than we are depending on them. In my home, I am the only one that is earning anything, because my husband lost many animals and then sold the remaining animals. Because most of us are supporting our husbands and our children on our own, they have no choice but to consult us. Some men are still behaving stubborn and trying to act like the boss. But they soon realise that when it comes to earnings, we are actually the bosses. They are not allowed to take our money from us.[96]

In Somali society, women generally retain independent control over their own earnings. ('When a woman earns an income, she can spend her money as she wants. She has complete control over it because she earned it. She doesn't have to consult her husband.') On the other hand, as women acquire more economic autonomy, they often find that more responsibility for household expenses – food, groceries, health care, schooling – falls on their shoulders by default (for instance, if men migrate and send nothing back to support the women and children), or is devolved to them by their husbands: 'In the old days, men used to be responsible for their families. Now, that has changed, and women are the ones responsible for the family.'[97] In some senses, therefore, this increased autonomy has been accompanied by an increased burden of responsibility on those people within Somali society who already take on more responsibility for domestic reproduction and household survival than anyone else.

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94 Female focus group participant, Gashamo town.

95 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

96 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

97 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

12.5 Women and the future

It is important to emphasise that many of the statements made by women throughout this report came from focus group discussions in Gashamo District, in the aftermath of a severe drought. Episodes of severe livelihood stress tend to magnify intra-household tensions, as roles and responsibilities of different household members change and authority shifts. In this context, there is no doubt that women's critical comments about men reflect a collapse of the ethos that "men take care of women", just as the fact that many men are resorting to chewing large amounts of *khat* is an abnormal behaviour, provoked by their inability to uphold their responsibilities to their wives and children. Some of these families will not survive these shocks and stresses, while others might well revert to their previous way of operating, with traditional gender roles restored.

Overall, women in Somali Region acknowledge that in many respects their lives are better than their mothers' lives, mainly because women have more freedom and independence today than they had in the past. ('Old people always say the past was better. But in the past, women were forced to remain in the house. Nowadays women can do something and earn a little money. We have more power than before.')

Women also identify "modernisation" and communications technology as powerful positive forces for change in Somali society:

> Because of better communication and modernisation, things are changing and women are in a better position. We all know of other places and cultures through TV and magazines, and can see that there are different alternatives. Before, our mothers didn't know anything else, so they just lived like before.[98]

These women are also optimistic about the future, believing that the recent trend towards more autonomy will continue for their daughters' generation: 'Women are now more independent and free. We are still controlled by our husbands, but not as much as before. It will get better for our daughters.'[99]

98 Female focus group participant, Gashamo town.

99 Female focus group participant, Gashamo town.

Section 4 Responding to vulnerability

Responses to vulnerability can be made by households themselves (coping strategies), by communities (informal transfers) and by public agencies – government and donors (formal transfers). These three levels of response are explored in the three chapters in this section.

13 Coping strategies

This chapter starts with a brief review of key findings from the empirical literature on household coping strategies in response to livelihood shocks. It continues by presenting survey findings on coping strategies actually adopted by households in Somali Region, and concludes with some observations on the gendered nature of coping strategies.

13.1 Coping strategies in the literature

Households confronted with a livelihood shock that undermines their access to food can react in a number of ways. During the 1980s and 1990s, an extensive literature on coping strategies, usually in the context of droughts in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, concluded that these responses can be categorised and tend to be adopted in fairly predictable sequences.[100] Figure 13.1 divides household responses to food shocks into those that 'protect consumption' and those that 'modify consumption'. Protecting consumption requires buying or being given food to maintain food intake levels. Modifying consumption includes reducing or diversifying consumption, or 'reducing consumers' by migrating or sending some household members elsewhere.

The frequency of adoption of different coping strategies provides an indication of the sequence in which they are adopted. As a general rule, strategies that are the least costly (both economically and socially) and are most easily reversible, are adopted first, as an immediate response to a food shock. Examples include mild rationing of food consumption, or reducing non-essential spending. Strategies that are most damaging to livelihoods or social status, and most difficult to reverse, are adopted last, after all other survival strategies have been exhausted. Examples include: selling farmland, begging, or engaging in illegal activities.

13.2 Coping strategies adopted in Somali Region

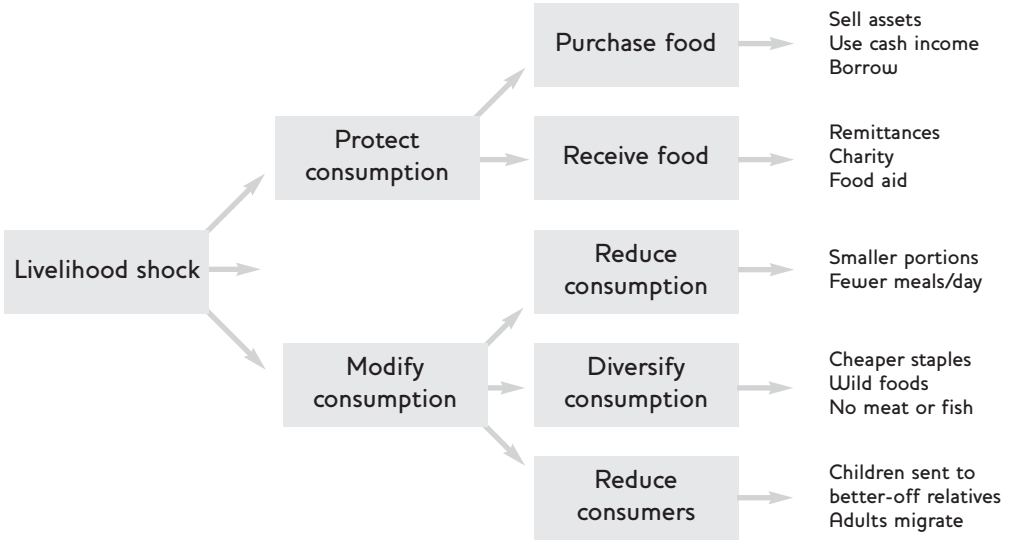
Our survey data confirm that households in Somali Region tend to follow the general principles established in many studies elsewhere. Rationing of food consumption (smaller portions and fewer meals) is an immediate response to austerity, and is adopted almost universally by the 1,100 households in our sample: 'Before these droughts, a Somali was known by eating meat and drinking milk every day. Now, we eat once or twice a day and nearly never have meat.'[101]

Another widely practised austerity measure is to reduce non-food spending, primarily to release household resources for food purchases. More than half our sampled families reported

100 The term "coping strategies" has been criticised for its implication that poor and vulnerable people can survive almost any livelihood crisis on their own resources, when the reality is that malnutrition and child mortality rates in many places (including Somali Region) are unacceptably high even at "normal" times (see Bradbury (2000) on the normalisation of crises in Africa).

101 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

Figure 13.1 **A categorisation of household coping strategies**



Source: Devereux 1993.

cutting spending on non-food items when food is short. The extent to which these household resource management strategies are actually implemented depends on the ability of the family to raise the cash or food they require from other sources (e.g. food aid or remittances).

Two-thirds of households surveyed call on support from relatives and friends, and receive food and other assistance in times of need (Table 13.1).[102] This is almost identical to the proportion of households that received food aid during 2004 (n=749/1,093 =68.5 per cent), although food aid is more concentrated among rural households (over 80 per cent) than urban households (7 per cent) (see Chapter 15). Conversely, a relatively high proportion of urban households (n=87/196 =44.4 per cent) receive informal support from relatives and friends.

The next category of responses is the adoption of a range of strategies to raise income for food purchases. The diversity of income-generating activities available to people in Somali Region is highlighted by the dozen sources of 'alternative' incomes listed under this category in Table 13.1.[103] Most frequently adopted among these is sale of assets (such as livestock), followed by borrowing to buy food. Next come two low-status activities that are adopted by the poor at all times, but by the non-poor only in times of hardship: selling firewood and selling charcoal. One household in ten admits sending its children out to work for income. Small minorities of households resort to potentially damaging behaviour – renting or "selling" rights to farmland,[104] begging and contraband trading – to raise cash for food purchases when the usual sources of food and income fail.

Under the heading 'diversify consumption', significant numbers of households collect wild foods (18 per cent), hunt (13 per cent), or fish (7 per cent) to supplement their diets when necessary – and where wild food, wild animals and opportunities for fishing (mainly in Somali Region's two permanent rivers) are available. Finally, about one-third of households alleviate the pressure on household resources by reducing the number of mouths to feed, with some

102 A more detailed analysis of the complex nature of informal support is provided in the next chapter.

103 These are 'alternative' incomes in the sense that these activities are not usually pursued by these households in making a living. As discussed earlier in this report, most incomes in Somali Region derive from livestock production, crop farming, trading, providing informal services, and (especially in urban areas) salaried employment. None of these activities is included in Table 13.1.

104 Since all land in Ethiopia is constitutionally "owned" by the state, individuals have no legal right to sell land over which they have usufruct rights. However, an active land rental market has emerged in all parts of Ethiopia where land is scarce. The distinction between "renting out land" and "selling land" is that rights to farm a plot of land are transferred for one season only in the former case, but permanently in the latter case.

Table 13.1 **Household coping strategies in Somali Region**

Coping strategy	Pastoral	Agro-pastoral	Farmer	Urban	Total
Reduce consumption					
Reduce number of meals per day	92%	96%	94%	54%	942 (87%)
Smaller portions	89%	91%	90%	46%	894 (82%)
Reduce non-food spending	60%	64%	55%	39%	608 (56%)
Receive food					
Support from relatives or friends	65%	71%	83%	44%	738 (68%)
Purchase food					
Sell assets to buy food	34%	44%	58%	32%	464 (43%)
Borrow cash to buy food	38%	30%	41%	30%	383 (35%)
Sell firewood	24%	13%	35%	8%	227 (21%)
Sell charcoal	18%	11%	24%	6%	170 (16%)
Send children to work	14%	12%	11%	1%	112 (10%)
Rely on handicraft	4%	3%	9%	1%	49 (5%)
Begging	1%	4%	6%	2%	38 (3%)
Save fodder for sale	0%	1%	8%	2%	32 (3%)
Rent out animals for food or cash	2%	4%	4%	1%	30 (3%)
Sell land	1%	2%	5%	1%	25 (2%)
Rent out land	0%	0%	6%	1%	21 (2%)
Contraband trading	0%	1%	1%	1%	9 (1%)
Diversify consumption					
Collect wild foods	9%	24%	26%	12%	195 (18%)
Hunting	8%	13%	29%	1%	146 (13%)
Fishing for food	1%	2%	23%	0%	74 (7%)
Reduce consumers					
Migrate to another country	19%	14%	16%	5%	154 (14%)
Migrate to urban areas	15%	15%	11%	13%	145 (13%)
Migrate to IDP camp	3%	1%	3%	11%	42 (4%)
Strategies per household	**5.0**	**5.1**	**6.4**	**3.1**	**5.1**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,088).

family members travelling abroad, to a town or to an IDP camp in search of food or work, or alternatively to stay with relatives who are not affected by the drought. One woman in Gashamo town told us: 'Two cousins have sent their children to live with me because they live deep in the bush and have few animals remaining and little food.'[105] Another case in point is a polygamous household in Kebribayah, which divided 'due to hunger', during the drought in 2004, with the second wife taking her two young children to Jigjiga to live until the situation in Kebribayah improved. During the drought of 2000, one entire farming family from Dolo Odo migrated to Luuq in Somalia to stay with relatives until the crisis had passed.

Farmers adopt a greater number of responses to food shocks than any other livelihood group: 6.4 strategies per household, against less than half that number (3.1) by urban households, with pastoralists and agro-pastoralists falling in between. Across districts, farmers in Kelafo adopt the highest number of strategies (7.8) and urban households in Jigjiga the least (1.7). It is unclear whether this signifies that farmers have a wider variety of choices, or a greater need to adopt

105 Female household head, Gashamo town.

Box 13.1 **Case study: household drought coping strategies**

'What we did in the drought, was cut down on the number of meals we ate: we reduced the number from three to two per day. We also reduced the amount and quality of food we ate at each meal – for both adults and children.

'When we lost animals, we sold maize from the small of piece of land where we grow maize, to buy animals. The land is usually just enough to grow enough for household needs; usually we don't sell anything.

'When things are really bad with the animals, we also have the option of moving with the animals. We only do that as a last option, though. These days, it is more common for some family members to move while others remain behind. But when things are really serious, then we all move.

'We still help each other a lot. For example, if someone dies, and the family is poor, before going to the grave, each family cooks food and tea. Each family also gives 10 Birr to the bereaved family. This happens not only in times of death, but when a family has a loss of any kind. If people have more, or in times of non-drought, they can give one goat to the bereaved family. Because we only have two cows, I will either give 10 Birr or cook some food (*awino*).'

Source: Interview with an agro-pastoralist woman in Kebribayah.

coping strategies – because they are exposed to more frequent or severe shocks than other households, for instance, or because they are less able to cope. Evidence presented earlier in this report on household incomes revealed that farmers are not poorer on average than other rural households, though they are less wealthy in terms of asset ownership (especially livestock).

An additional factor is that farmers are less mobile than pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, and in a region as drought-prone and volatile as Somali Region, mobility is a vital defence against livelihood shocks. On the other hand, since more than one farming household in four in our survey had at least one member migrating to another country, to an urban area or even to an IDP camp as a drought survival strategy, this suggests high levels of livelihood stress among farmers. When asked what they do in anticipation of drought, focus group participants in a farming community in Kelafo District claimed that they first cut down on consumption, then slaughter or sell the few animals they have, and as a last resort migrate across the border to Somalia.

Box 13.1 describes the main responses adopted by one agro-pastoralist household in Kebribayah to the drought of 2004.

13.3 Gendered coping strategies in Somali Region

Many women have formed or joined groups that provide mutual support, such as savings groups. These groups appear to be more common in urban areas, perhaps because people in rural areas live in smaller communities and are more mobile. Urban women also control more property and are more engaged in trade and business, so can benefit more from borrowing and savings facilities. However, some women's savings groups were found in rural settlements as well, such as Gashamo town.

> I am a member of a savings group with about 23 women. Each woman pays 20 Birr every day. When your turn comes around, you receive 2 million Shillings. I joined in order to save money. When I receive my lump sum, I can buy food and clothes for the children. That helps me because the money from my *khat* business is only small amounts each day. My turn comes around every three months or so.[106]

106 Female *khat* trader, Gashamo town.

Informal institutions such as rotating savings groups can provide some support in times of need. However, they are more effective in cases of "idiosyncratic" shocks (e.g. an illness or death in the family) than "covariate" shocks (e.g. a district-wide drought). At such times, all members of the savings group will want to withdraw funds at the same time. Nonetheless, savings groups can be seen as a response to vulnerability and the absence of financial markets (savings and insurance) and effective formal safety nets in Somali Region.

There is some evidence that the impacts of livelihood shocks within the household are gendered, in the sense that women and men take the strain in different ways. Asked whether drought affects women any differently from men, all the participants in a women's focus group discussion in an IDP camp answered in the affirmative, and some argued that droughts affect women and children more severely than men.

> We care for the children and since drought affects the availability of milk, children become malnourished, lactating mothers grow weaker, women have to trek long distances to fetch water, and some husbands migrate, leaving women not only to look after the children but also to provide the household food. These extra responsibilities are back breaking.[107]

The reasons why men migrate during difficult times may be in the best interests of the family – to preserve the household's livestock by finding water and grazing elsewhere, to search for food and income, or simply to reduce the pressure on limited household resources. Nonetheless, a major consequence of men's absence is increased pressure on women, who necessarily take on additional responsibilities to provide for all the household members left behind.

> In times of drought, because men don't know anything else, the only thing they can do, is to migrate. My husband has left me to take care of the children while he is gone with two sons and the animals. So, droughts increase women's burden; it's easier for men – they just leave. We have to see to everything and everybody left behind.[108]

> In the drought, men migrate to other places – either looking for work or with their livestock. My husband has been gone for more than a year now. First, he left with the animals, but he lost some more. Then, he left to try and find work. But I had to remain here to look after the children. This happened to other women also.[109]

According to several women, rationing of food consumption within drought-affected households is borne disproportionately by women, though often this decision is taken by women themselves – in their roles as wives and mothers, they choose to put the needs of their husbands and children first. In extreme cases, this can go so far that it has damaging implications for women's well-being.

> I was pregnant during the drought of 2004, and I had to make the food go further. Often, I used to go without in order to give more food to my husband and the children. The men don't know about those kind of sacrifices we women make. I had problems in childbirth because of my poor nutrition.[110]

107 Female focus group participant, Maromadobes IDP camp, Shinile District.

108 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

109 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

110 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

14 Informal transfers

This chapter describes the range of informal transfers that are made between relatives and friends in Somali Region, enumerates the transfers actually received by households in our survey, and discusses the limitations of these mechanisms in supporting vulnerable families during crises.

14.1 Informal transfer mechanisms in Somali Region

Somali culture is constructed around complex social networks that serve a number of social and livelihood-related functions. These institutions reinforce clan solidarity, and also provide a social safety net that delivers some protection against the extreme variability of pastoralist livelihoods. Importantly, this social protection is much more deeply embedded within the culture than simply gifts among relatives in times of need. One reason for this is that gifts and exchanges are not only made on an informal one-to-one basis; there are complex religious rules (such as *zakaat*) and social norms which mean that food, cash, animals and labour are regularly transferred at the level of the community or society. The "gift culture" is systematised and compulsory; not discretionary and voluntary. Even in good years, resources are shared and exchanged within and between (sub-)clans through livestock rearing agreements, compensation payments, feasts and social ceremonies. These arrangements build social cohesion, maintain the social order and provide a level of social protection that goes beyond social assistance to cope with drought or a death in the family. They also keep capital (income and assets) flowing through the pastoralist economy, providing livelihood support to poorer community members and acting as a redistributive safety net when a shock threatens lives and livelihoods.

To an extent that is unusual in most contemporary societies, a wide range of informal transfer mechanisms are institutionalised and operational in Somali Region.[111] These can be clustered into three categories, according to the type of resource transferred:

1 ***Redistribution of food:*** food or grain gifts; *ciyi* (distribution of meat to neighbours after a slaughter); *Allah bari* or *sab* (sacrifice made to feed the poor); *awino* (cooking food for the hungry); *qharan* (contribution of food or animals to relatives); zero-interest grain loans.

2 ***Redistribution of cash:*** remittances (from relatives living temporarily or permanently abroad, especially the Middle East, Europe and North America); *dhibaad* (cash gift to married daughters); other cash gift (e.g. *sadaqa*); zero-interest cash loans.

3 ***Redistribution of productive resources:*** free use of pack animals (camels or donkeys); *irmaansi* or *maal* (donation or loan of milk animals); free use of oxen or plough; *xoolo goyn* (restocking of poorer relatives); *kaalo* (gift of livestock to newly-weds); *goob* (watering livestock or tilling a farm for a day's food); free labour; seed loans or gifts.

Some terms apply to more than one form of resource transfer – *kaalo*, *qharan* and *zakaat*, for instance, all describe "contributions" or gifts that can be made in cash, food, or livestock.

Table 14.1 confirms that households in Somali Region receive a number of informal transfers. In our rural survey, the average household received three different types of transfer (poorer rural households receive six or seven) within the previous 12 months, while urban households, which are generally less poor and less vulnerable, received fewer forms of support. Interestingly, remittances are the only type of transfer received by more urban households (38 per cent) than rural households (14 per cent), which reflects the better connectedness of urban households with the wider world, and also the fact that remittances are often used to help relatives in Somali Region relocate out of rural livelihoods and settle in towns.

111 Definitions of several of these informal mechanisms are provided in the Glossary of this report.

Table 14.1 **Transfers received in Somali Region, 2004/5**

Informal transfer	Pastoral	Agro pastoral	Farmer	Urban	Total
Distribution of slaughtered meat (*ciyi*)	71%	71%	64%	48%	704 (65%)
Free labour (*goob*)	45%	51%	48%	5%	439 (40%)
Donation/loan of milk animals (*irmaansi*)	39%	47%	39%	7%	388 (36%)
Sacrifice to feed the poor (*Allah bari, sab*)	34%	36%	32%	22%	347 (32%)
Free use of pack animal (camel, donkey)	16%	44%	17%	1%	229 (21%)
Remittances (from relatives elsewhere)	20%	7%	14%	38%	197 (18%)
Gift to married daughters (*dhibaad*)	21%	18%	14%	16%	190 (17%)
Restocking poorer relatives (*xoolo goyn*)	18%	21%	14%	2%	164 (15%)
Gift of livestock to newly-weds (*kaalo*)	19%	16%	12%	8%	157 (14%)
Free use of oxen or plough	1%	20%	9%	0%	90 (8%)
Zakaat	7%	6%	5%	6%	66 (6%)
Seed gift	0%	3%	12%	0%	44 (4%)
Other cash gift (*sadaqa*)	5%	3%	3%	2%	37 (3%)
Food or grain gift	4%	3%	4%	1%	36 (3%)
Cash loan (zero interest)	5%	1%	3%	3%	33 (3%)
Seed loan (zero interest)	1%	2%	5%	0%	27 (2%)
Grain loan (zero interest)	0%	0%	3%	1%	12 (1%)
Transfers per household	**3.1**	**3.5**	**3.0**	**1.6**	**2.9**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,088).

The most frequently mentioned informal transfer is food (*ciyi* – the customary distribution of meat to neighbours after an animal is slaughtered). This practice is almost universal among livestock owners, but is also common in urban areas where livestock ownership is low. A variation on *ciyi* is *Allah bari* or *sab* – sacrificing an animal specifically to provide food for the poor. This is also one of the most frequently reported informal transfers, received by one in three households surveyed.

After *ciyi*, the second most frequent transfer is 'free' labour (*goob*), which was received by half of all rural households. Among pastoralists, *goob* takes the form of watering and grazing livestock in return for a day's food plus tea or *khat*. Among farmers, *goob* involves helping someone who is labour-constrained (e.g. an older person or a female-headed household without adult males) to plough or weed their field, again in return for a daily meal and tea or *khat*. Sometimes this kind of labour-sharing occurs on an exchange basis – groups of farmers working on each other's fields as labour parties – though this traditional practice is less popular nowadays than in the past.

Transfers of animals are also common between rural households, but almost non-existent among urban households. Livestock owners often lend or donate milking animals to relatives (*irmaansi* or *maal*), to be reared in exchange for their milk and/or offspring. Alternatively, wealthier livestock owners with pack animals to spare will lend a camel or donkey to poorer relatives. Two other important mechanisms for redistributing livestock are restocking of poor relatives who have lost their animals (*xoolo goyn*), and gifts of livestock to newly married couples (*kaalo*). In our survey, significant numbers of rural households had benefited from *irmaansi* (42 per cent), free use of pack animals (26 per cent), *xoolo goyn* (18 per cent) and *kaalo* (16 per cent), in the past year. Among agro-pastoralists (20 per cent) and farmers (9 per cent), lending or sharing oxen and ox-ploughs is also practised.

It is interesting to note from Table 14.1 how few informal transfers are made in the form of loans rather than gifts. Several gifts of cash, food grains and seeds were reported. Access to credit is constrained, from both formal and informal lenders, and only a few households reported receiving loans at zero interest from friends or relatives, whether in the form of cash, food or seeds. Most loans of food (grain) and seeds, and most seed loans, occur among farming households.

14.2 Access to informal transfers

An important factor in terms of access to informal support concerns "circles of responsibility" (at the societal level) and the extensiveness of social networks (at the household or family level). The circles of responsibility – and of support – for any Somali start with his or her immediate family, then radiate out to the extended family, the sub-clan, the clan, and finally to Somalis in general. Having a relative who is living elsewhere and/or is employed in the formal sector, and who can be approached in times of need, can be an important source of support, especially because salaries are not dependent on rainfall, so employees' incomes are not correlated with drought. 'I have a brother who is a security guard in Jigjiga. He is also married with many children. But when he can, he tries to give us something.'[112]

A similar point applies to remittances, which are a major source of transfers into Somali Region from abroad, and provide an independent source of income for many families, either on a regular basis (e.g. monthly) or in response to requests for assistance at times of livelihood stress. 'I am not lucky enough to have any relative living abroad who could send me anything. I once knew a lady who used to receive contributions from relatives in England and the USA. She never had any worries or problems like the rest of us.'[113] One household in Jigjiga town comprises a 39-year-old man, his 31-year-old wife, her 18-year-old sister, and their three young children aged 7, 6 and 4. The husband sells building materials for a living, earning around 4,500 Birr per month. They own no livestock and do no other paid work. However, the wife receives 300 dollars each month from her brother living in the USA. This is sufficient to give the family a comfortable living.

Remittance flows into Somali Region are large and extremely difficult to quantify, but it should be emphasised that many families receive remitted income regularly – often in the form of a monthly money transfer – and not only during emergencies. Interestingly, remittance income is rarely invested in pastoralism, but instead is used to finance alternative livelihoods. Mainly it is spent on: (1) building permanent structures (mainly houses or stores in urban areas); (2) working capital for business (including trading); (3) educating children; and (4) to support the family though a shock (such as a costly illness, or a social obligation such as a dowry payment)[114] or a community-wide shock such as a drought.

The problem with calling on employed relatives, or requesting remittances from relatives living abroad, is that access to these sources of informal social protection depends on each family's circumstances, but is not available to all. If the extended family cannot offer adequate protection in times of need, people turn next to the institutionalised support provided by their clan.

> When I face problems, I first turn to my mother and father for help. The next thing I rely on is *kaalo* I inform elders and close family of my problem, and they ask for contributions from everyone.[115]
>
> Being Somali, and Isaq, and of the same sub-clans, they are the first people we turn to for help. According to *qharan*, people will make a contribution of a goat or cow. Then, if the problem isn't solved at that level, those who have relatives outside will send word to them requesting help. This will still be *qharan*.

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112 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

113 Elderly widow, rural Gashamo.

114 In contemporary Somali culture, there is no fixed dowry payment. Instead, the amount that parents of the groom pay to parents of the bride is negotiated on an individual basis. Traditionally, dowry was paid in livestock (e.g. 20 camels), but it has become increasingly monetised, usually being paid in cash (often in US dollars, reflecting the importance of remittances from the Somali diaspora abroad). Families with relatives living in the USA might pay as much as US$5,000, while those with no relatives abroad will pay just US$ 100. This gives some indication of the scale of resources that those with access to remittances can call on, either regularly or in times of need.

115 A widow in Gashamo town.

Closely related to the immediate circles of extended family and sub-clan in Somali communities are neighbours. Several respondents mentioned that they have relationships of reciprocity with their neighbours, which are important to maintain as sources of "social insurance" in hard times.

> A few weeks ago, I had to ask my neighbour for food because we didn't have anything in the house. She gave me food for me and the children because my husband is away and we didn't have any food. He came back and had some money – he was involved in charcoal burning with some men in the bush somewhere. Then we were able to help my neighbour and her family because they were also in need.[116]

14.3 Availability of informal transfers

Despite the range and complexity of Somali informal transfer mechanisms, and the fact that they are deeply embedded in Somali society, there are many reasons why the capacity of informal redistribution to meet all social protection needs is limited, especially when "covariate" livelihood shocks like drought affect entire communities. Reasons given by local people include: declining capacity to provide support; declining willingness to provide support; and the shame associated with asking for help. These can be categorised as economic, cultural, and social reasons.

Many people in rural Somali Region commented on the recent erosion of informal social support systems. Mostly this was attributed to the recent sequence of severe livelihood shocks, which they described as 'equalisers': 'Everyone in this community is at the same level of income, so we couldn't help each other this year.'[117] One consequence of these recurrent shocks is that the ability of those worst affected to call on others for support has been compromised, because the basis for informal social transfers has been undermined.

> Nobody that I know received any assistance through *xoolo goyn*, because everybody was equally badly affected. The system can only work when there are some better-off people in the community, to help the less fortunate. But now we're seeing times when everybody is in the same bad position. Before, there were always some people who were able to help others. It just shows how bad these present droughts are.[118]
>
> Although the systems still exist, they have become less important and less used because of the increasingly difficult circumstances. For example, this year's drought, which was called *Sima* ["the equaliser"], made it nearly impossible for people to make contributions and help each other since everyone became nearly equally poor.[119]
>
> Before these recent droughts, we all used to help each other through xoolo goyn, where everyone used to contribute one animal to help someone in need. Now, everyone is equally poor, therefore we don't do xoolo goyn. It's not because we don't want to help each other. The old people tell us this is the first time that people haven't been able to do xoolo goyn. It shows that times have never been as bad as this time.[120]

Even though the institutions continue to exist and do provide vital support in many cases, their effectiveness in practice may be diminishing over time. ('No I didn't ask for *xoolo goyn*. Who shall we go to? These days everyone is in a bad situation.') Declining capacity to assist has two aspects: providing less support, and providing support less frequently. One implication of this latter aspect is that people needing assistance can call on their relatives or clan only once or

116 Woman in rural Gashamo District.

117 Agropastoralist in Kebribayah District.

118 Male pastoralist, Gashamo.

119 Female focus group participant, Gashamo.

120 Woman teashop owner, rural Gashamo.

twice, after which that source of support dries up and these people are left to cope on their own. 'Because we are poorer, even when we can help, we can usually only help once. But if the person comes back tomorrow, it's not possible to help again. We are also not able to help with as much as before."[121]

There is a widespread perception that the assistance people could draw on in 2004 was less than in the past. It is not yet clear whether this reflects a temporary setback – a short-term contraction of social support due to the severity of recent droughts – or an irreversible trend, because of a permanent shift in the culture away from traditional informal institutions of social protection.

Some respondents argue that the erosion of the economic basis for informal transfers is driving long-term social change in Somali society. 'The drought is causing us to neglect our culture. We aren't able to make *ayitu* [charitable contributions]. You need money and an income to do it. We are losing our culture because of poverty."[122] A specific concern raised is that attitudes to helping each other are changing – the circles of responsibility are collapsing and people are becoming more individualistic and "selfish". This view resonates with evidence from elsewhere in Africa, that processes of modernisation are introducing materialistic values, commercialising relationships and displacing traditional values of reciprocity and non-commercial transactions. In the Somali context, an increasing source of vulnerability is that the effectiveness of informal social protection might be eroding, to the extent that the "gift culture" is in permanent decline.

> This cumulative poverty and increased hunger has also caused people to become selfish and cruel. Even if they can help, they are hesitant because they don't want to take risks. They don't want to be left without something. Poverty makes you more cautious. If these droughts continue, we will lose these practices completely. This also means that poor people will be worse off, because they will not be able to rely on help from their community. In the past, if you were poor, you always knew that you could get support from others.[123]

One man interviewed in Fafaan Valley IDP Camp was displaced there by the 2000 drought, when all his 34 head of cattle died. He told us he would have persisted with pastoralism if the traditional resource-sharing institutions had assisted him by restocking some of his lost animals. He believes that these mutual support mechanisms have been weakened by successive droughts and that Somali cultural values have also shifted against helping others, except for immediate relatives. It is this negative combination of economic and cultural changes that forced him and his family out of pastoralism. He has no plans to return to livestock rearing, as he has no asset base and feels that it would be impossible for him to restart life as a pastoralist without support from the Somali community, which he believes is no longer guaranteed as it was in the past.[124]

Finally, there are social costs ("shame and stigma") to calling on the community for assistance, which discourages some people from asking for help until it is absolutely unavoidable.

> I don't rely on any of the traditional Somali coping strategies and networks. It is too public, and there is a certain shame and stigma involved. With qharan, for example, the elders announce to the community: 'Alima needs assistance. Can you please help by making a contribution?' I would be too shy to have my business told to everyone: everyone knows your circumstances and knows you are struggling. So I only approach my closest relatives and clansmen.[125]

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121 Female focus group participant, Gashamo.

122 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

123 Female focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

124 Life history interview, Fafaan Valley IDP camp.

125 Woman store-owner, Gashamo town.

14.4 Gender and informal assistance

Although the provision of informal assistance is often articulated as being dominated by men – not surprisingly, since men own most of the household's assets, control most of the resources and usually have ultimate decision-making power within Somali households – women's roles in supporting extended families in times of need are greater than is often recognised. Women's roles also tend to increase during periods of livelihood stress, precisely because men's ability to provide for the family declines as household assets decline (e.g. if livestock die during drought). This is evident from the case of one woman from Gashamo town:

> If a woman has a shop and her husband has lost his livestock because of the drought, she has to maintain the household on her small income. But it is not only the immediate family that rely on her. In my own case, when my husband lost most of his animals, I am the only one maintaining my six children, and some of my husband's relatives who also lost their animals and live out in the villages. I'm helping three other families: because they are out in the bush villages, their wives aren't trading or earning any income.[126]

There are also some informal institutions that exist solely for women to provide support to other women. One example is *ischar*, where women spontaneously get together 'and decide to make contributions to a woman who is in particular need, for example if her husband has died'. These institutions also assist women in the community who become *de facto* female-headed households when their husbands migrate during droughts.

> Women are also helping each other because of the drought. We give food to those women whose husbands have migrated and who are struggling without anything. Other women make contributions to give something to those women who are really in need. Others try to give loans and credit to poor women.[127]

14.5 *Zakaat*

Zakaat is a mandatory contribution to "the poor and the needy" that is made by all Muslims who can afford it, and is payable during the annual Ramadan. The minimum level before *zakaat* must be paid is known as the *nisaab*, and is calculated as a fraction of income earned, produce harvested and assets owned during the year. For farm produce, the *nisaab* is 612 kg; for livestock, the *nisaab* is 5 for camels, 30 for cows, and 40 for sheep and goats (Shu'aib, 1991).

Figure 14.1 shows the year when households in each district sub-sample paid *zakaat* most recently, from 'this year' (2004/5) to '4 or more years ago' (2000 or before). In each district, a number of households have never paid *zakaat* – despite all being practising Muslims – usually because they are too poor to meet the *nisaab*. This question was included in the survey questionnaire as a way of capturing the impact of the 2004 drought on social obligations. As might be expected, districts that were worst affected by the drought saw a sharp decline in *zakaat* payments. Only 3 per cent of households in Gashamo and 10 per cent in Kebribayah paid *zakaat* in 2004. This compares with 61 per cent in Jigjiga town and 62 per cent in Shilabo, and an average of 39 per cent of households across the full sample (n=425/1,091). This finding provides a powerful proxy indicator of the severity of the drought that afflicted Gashamo in 2004, where 66 per cent of households surveyed had paid *zakaat* in 2003.

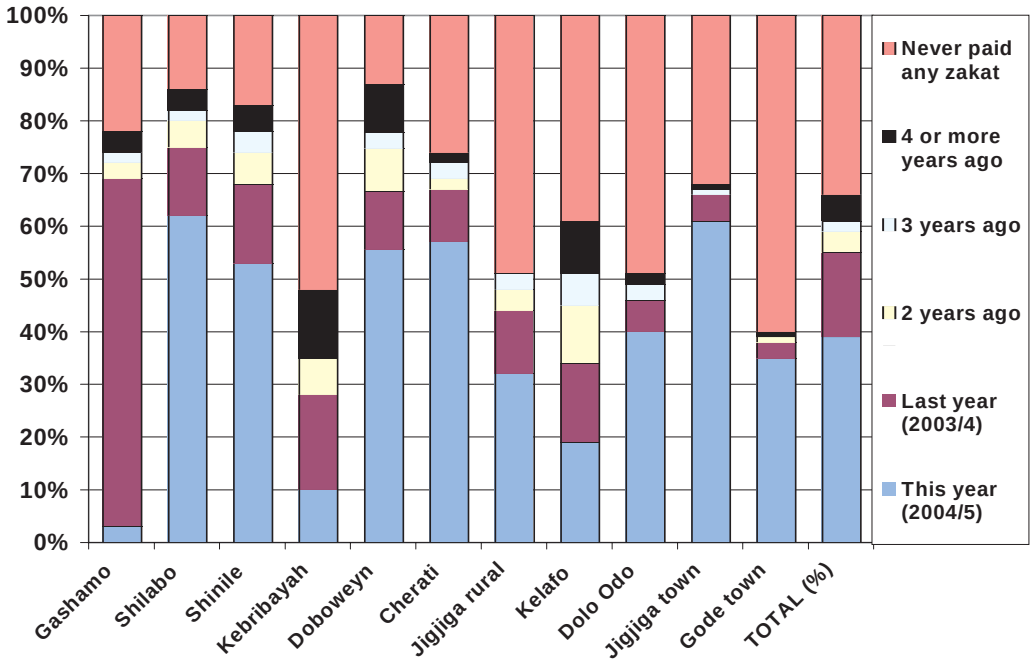
Figure 14.1 also tells us something about the distribution of poverty in Somali Region. Kebribayah is one of the poorest districts surveyed, in terms of cash incomes – and it has one of the highest proportions of households that have never paid *zakaat* at all (52 per cent).[128] In

126 Woman teashop owner, rural Gashamo.

127 A woman in Gashamo town.

128 Only Gode town has a higher proportion of non-paying households (60 per cent), but this is complicated to interpret as the Gode sample included a cross-section of wealthier and poorer urban residents.

Figure 14.1 **Most recent payment of *zakaat*, by district**



Gashamo, which is wealthier in "normal times" but vulnerable to livelihood shocks, only 22 per cent of households have never paid *zakaat*. Across the full sample, one-third of households (n=369/1,091 =34 per cent) had never paid *zakaat*. This could be tested as a proxy indicator for poverty. Simply asking the single question: 'Have you ever paid *zakaat*?' could be a means of identifying the poorest households in their communities. In our sample, this indicator produces a proxy poverty headcount of 34 per cent.

In general, urban households are most likely to settle their *zakaat* obligations in cash, though crops – maize, sorghum, wheat, rice – are also offered, while pastoralists pay mainly in animals and agro-pastoralists pay in animals and/or crops. In Jigjiga town, the average *zakaat* payment in 2004 was 884 Birr, though one household with seven members gave 14kg of maize. ('For each person in the house I paid 2kg.') The pastoralists of Gashamo made their most recent *zakaat* payments most typically in the form of goats (n=48/68 =71 per cent), followed by sheep [11/68 =16 per cent), camels [7/68 =10 per cent), and in one case, a cow. Among the agro-pastoralists of Kebribayah, payment in the form of sheep and goats is also common (n=26/43 =60 per cent), with maize and sorghum crops being next most significant [13/43 =30 per cent).

Despite the severity of the livelihoods crisis in Gashamo, only 4 per cent of households interviewed reported receiving assistance in the form of *zakaat* in 2004. This is an indication that pastoralists (at least in Gashamo) are generally regarded as wealthy families that are more likely to give charity to others than be in need of it themselves. In Kebribayah, where chronic poverty appears to be higher, 11 per cent of households had been beneficiaries of *zakaat*. In Jigjiga town, too, 11 per cent of households had received *zakaat* in 2004 – on average, 220 Birr per household, plus a sheep or goat and some wheat or maize. More generally, there was a widely held view that *zakaat* has declined in the face of recurrent livelihood shocks: '*Zakaat* has been decreasing in the last ten years – mainly because of the many droughts. 2004 was the final straw.'[129]

129 Women's focus group participant, rural Gashamo.

14.6 The limits of redistribution?

This chapter has provided evidence of the existence and functioning of a wide range of informal redistributive mechanisms within Somali Region. Some of these are variations on the traditional sharing and reciprocity arrangements found in many pastoralist societies, while others (such as *zakaat*) are charitable obligations intrinsic to the Islamic religion. Together, these mechanisms should provide a fairly comprehensive informal social security system. But how effective are these informal safety nets, especially for those who need support most (i.e. the poorest) and at times when support is most needed (e.g. during drought emergencies)? The idealisation of redistributive mechanisms within pastoralist societies and within Islamic culture might reflect an outdated and romanticised view, rather than a realistic understanding of how these mechanisms operate in practice today.

At least three explanations were given for why informal transfer mechanisms are less able to deliver effective social protection to the poor and vulnerable these days than in the past:

1 Less capacity to provide support (because of poverty, exacerbated by "equalising" shocks).

2 Less willingness to provide support (because of cultural change – declining social solidarity).

3 Reluctance to ask others for help (because of "social costs" – shame and stigma).

There are also interactions between the economic and cultural factors. One IDP in Gode District explained how livelihood stress is driving cultural change: 'Before, people used to love one another so much so that they shared out the little they had among the needy. But now, I do not know why but that kind of love is diminishing, maybe drought is hardening people's feelings.'[130]

When asked if they had ever given or received *zakaat*, respondents to our household survey often laughed, and pointed out that contributing *zakaat* is constrained in contexts of widespread poverty: 'We are too poor for *zakaat* here. You have to have at least 30 sheep before you must give one for *zakaat*. Which of us here has 30 sheep? Nobody!'[131] On the other hand, receiving *zakaat* requires having patronage connections to wealthier people, or access to those who collect and distribute *zakaat* contributions. According to one key informant in Jigjiga town:

> Charity begins at home. So when you are rich enough to give *zakaat*, you first look after your poor relatives, then others in the clan who need assistance. After that you might give something to beggars in the street. If you have no one to give to, there are people collecting at the mosque who redistribute to the poor, so you can give to them.

The problem for the rural poor of Somali Region is that they are so far removed, both socially and spatially, from the urban elites who have significant resources to redistribute, that they are unlikely to benefit from any redistributive mechanisms based on patronage or kin relationships, while the amounts collected at their local mosques are trivial. As the people of Kebribayah told us: '*Zakaat* is for rich people and those who know them; it is not for people like us'.

To conclude, then, the evidence suggests that informal mechanisms of social protection in rural Somali Region might well be limited in their effectiveness in terms of assisting the poorest and most vulnerable, for two reasons: "horizontally", poverty limits the pool of resources needed to provide an economic basis for more than strictly limited redistribution, and "vertically", the process of redistributive transfers trickling down from wealthier to poorer individuals appears to stop short of providing adequate support to those people who need these forms of social assistance most.

130 Life history interview, Sagarabuur IDP camp, Gode.

131 Male pastoralist, rural Kebribayah.

15 Safety nets

This chapter focuses on the recent increase in food aid as a response to a perceived increase in vulnerability in Somali Region. Food aid deliveries and receipts are documented, as well as uses of food aid by recipients. Several concerns are raised, including mis-targeting and diversion of food aid; possible disincentive effects on local production and markets; and a mismatch between commodities provided and beneficiaries' tastes and preferences.

15.1 Trends in food aid deliveries

Food aid deliveries to Somali Region have increased dramatically since the drought emergency of 2000. In the mid-1990s, the proportion of the regional population who were declared to be in need of food assistance was negligible – just 3 per cent in 1995 and 1996 (Table 15.1). In the food crisis year of 2000, this proportion peaked at 40 per cent of the region's population, and since that year it has remained consistently at around one-quarter of the population. In terms of numbers of targeted beneficiaries, this increased from approximately 100,000 people in the mid-1990s to over one million people in four of the last five years – a tenfold escalation in food aid beneficiaries.

Two interpretations of this rapid increase in food aid deliveries of Somali Region are possible. The first is that this is an appropriate and proportionate response to deteriorating food security and rising chronic vulnerability in the region. The second is that this is an inappropriate and excessive reaction to the failure of the federal government and the international community to respond promptly to the food crisis of 2000, so that food aid flows have been maintained at an unnecessarily high level ever since. The question remains: why have food aid deliveries to Somali Region stayed so high since 2000? Has there really been a tenfold increase in vulnerability in less than a decade?

The answer probably lies between the two extremes. Evidence presented in this report suggests that vulnerability has risen during the past decade, for most people in rural Somali Region. However, this does not mean that delivering 200,000 tons of food aid per annum is an effective response. For one thing, the nature of vulnerability is complex and multidimensional, and does not inevitably result in shortages of food at the household level. For instance, when vulnerability is related to conflict which constrains livestock access to grazing and water, rather than triggered by drought that undermines food crop production, it is not clear that food aid is either a necessary or sufficient response. Another concern is with the delivery of food aid, which is often poorly targeted, patchy in coverage, and transfers commodities that are not preferred by local people.

Table 15.1 **Food aid deliveries to Somali Region, 1995–2004**

Year	People declared in need of food	Per cent of regional population	Food aid delivered (metric tons)	Food aid per beneficiary (kg)	Food aid per capita (kg)
1995	110,000	3	n/a		
1996	100,000	3	n/a		
1997	235,000	7	n/a		
1998	366,000	10	n/a		
1999	400,000	11	110,545	276	30.29
2000	1,500,000	40	280,106	187	74.52
2001	1,000,000	26	88,658	89	22.90
2002	900,000	23	130,942	145	32.84
2003	1,147,070	28	203,569	177	49.56
2004	1,120,100	26	206,396	184	48.79

Source: Calculated from DPPC data, Addis Ababa.

Figure 15.1 **Food aid on sale in Jigjiga town, February 2004**

This photograph shows wholesalers selling bags of wheat and corn soy blend (CSB) in Jigjiga town market, during the *Jilaal* season of 2004. These are bags of food aid, sold either by the intended beneficiaries or by others who obtained this food illegally. This "foreign wheat" was selling at 1 Birr per tin. Across the street, women retailers were selling local wheat at 1.5 Birr per tin. Their prices had already been pushed down by competition from food aid, and several retailers had reportedly been forced out of trading as their profit margins were squeezed. Some farmers in the Jigjiga plains have apparently stopped producing wheat for the market, unable to compete with free food aid being sold at below cost on the market.

This alleged disincentive effect on local production and trade needs to be carefully investigated.[132] Firm conclusions cannot be drawn on the basis of our qualitative evidence. If true, however, it sends a very negative message to pastoralists, at a time when the government is encouraging pastoralists to take up agriculture and become agro-pastoralists or settled farmers. Local farmers and traders cannot compete against free food, even if they drop their prices, which many are being forced to do.

These problems are exacerbated if food aid is delivered at the wrong time, so that it coincides with the harvest season. During fieldwork, farmers in a community discussion held in Kelafo District complained about the bad timing of food aid deliveries. According to these farmers, a large food aid distribution was made in their communities just after the recent harvest, which reduced market demand for their surplus grain production and caused prices to fall sharply.[133] An intriguing contrast was observed between the attitudes to food aid of grain farmers and cash crop farmers. This particular village has a strong market relationship with neighbouring Somalia, and Kelafo farmers who export onions and fruit crops noted

132 A recent review of the dependency effects of food aid concluded that evidence for these negative effects is usually anecdotal and inconclusive, and argues for more rigorous impact assessments to be conducted before any definitive conclusions can be drawn (Barrett and Maxwell 2005).

133 Even crop farmers who do not produce surpluses tend to sell some grain after the harvest, to raise cash for other household needs, so these deficit producers also suffer an income shock when food prices all because of competition from food aid handouts.

that demand for their produce actually rises after a food aid distribution in Somalia, since recipients sell some food aid to buy vegetables and fruit.

Interestingly, even local people who are benefiting from receiving food aid handouts acknowledge that the amount of food aid coming into their region is excessive and damaging. At a workshop for this project, held with pastoralists and stakeholders in Jigjiga town, five out of six break-out groups that discussed this issue concluded that food aid is not a solution to food insecurity in Somali Region, except possibly during emergencies. On the contrary, they said, it is undermining local farmers and distorting local markets. Concerns were raised that Somali Region might become another "victim" of the chronic food aid dependency that affects other regions of Ethiopia, especially the highlands.

15.2 Food aid targeting and distribution

In response to reports of extremely high global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates for Gashamo in early 2005 (19 per cent GAM, for instance, exceeding the emergency threshold of 15 per cent), food aid donors such as WFP argued that this could not be caused by food deficits, since large volumes of food aid were being delivered to Somali Region, but must instead be due to poor water supplies, causing illness and deaths from diarrhoea and related diseases. This might be at least partly true – in which case emergency water and sanitation programming should be prioritised, rather than putting an exclusive focus on food programming – or it might suggest that food aid targeting procedures are seriously inadequate, or that food aid is being diverted before reaching its intended beneficiaries.

The distribution of food aid in Somali Region can be seen as following a "cascade" approach, from the centre down to targeted households. Problems with food aid distribution were recorded at several levels: from the warehouse to the community, from the community to the household, and from the household head to individual household members. At each stage, mis-targeting or diversion draws some food out of the pipeline and contributes to reducing the likelihood that food aid will reach the most needy, for whom it is intended.

15.2.1 From warehouse to community

Many rumours are circulating in Somali Region alleging corruption in the distribution of food aid. Some of these were verified by more than one independent source, though the scale of food aid diversion is impossible to quantify. Early in 2005 the Somali regional DPPB Head and his Deputy were sacked for corruption, following allegations that DPPB staff were selling substantial amounts of food aid and pocketing the proceeds. One woman in Dolo Odo told us she has heard stories of the local administration in Dolo town selling food aid meant for local people. She suggested that this needed to be investigated and, if true, the personnel involved should be punished and sacked. The fact that a flourishing market for food aid wheat and corn soy blend (CSB) exists throughout Somali Region that is not legally prohibited – there are no restrictions on beneficiaries selling their rations – facilitates this corruption, as there is no way of tracing where food aid being sold came from, or who sold it.

The targeting procedures used to identify communities and select households who are eligible for food aid are not transparent to local people, many of whom complained that they are overlooked in food deliveries, without knowing why. People in one drought-affected agro-pastoral settlement in Kebribayah, for instance, commented that they are aware of food aid going to neighbouring communities, and cannot understand why their own community is overlooked: 'We see the food trucks going past, but they never stop here.'

In other cases, people complained that the amount of food they receive is very variable – they have no idea what rations they are entitled to receive, or how often – and that food aid deliveries are erratic and unpredictable. One household of three adults and six children in Doboweyn was given 50kg of wheat as food aid in 2003, but only three cupfuls of wheat in 2004 (about 1½kg). A female-headed household in Dolo Odo reported receiving food aid only once a year, and only in small quantities – 2kg of wheat per household

member, like all other households in the village. (Table 15.2, which shows that households in Dolo Odo received, on average, just 7.7kg of food aid in 2004/05, supports this assertion.) She described this amount of food as insignificant.

A few households living in border districts such as Gashamo or Shilabo reported collecting food aid from neighbouring Somaliland, where they generally received much larger allocations of food. Two households received 200kg and another two received 250kg of grain during 2004.

15.2.2 From community to household

Once food aid is delivered to communities it is often handed over to senior community members or a committee, to decide how to allocate this food among community members. The assumption behind community selection of beneficiaries in pastoralist societies is that their insider knowledge, combined with a traditional ethos of sharing, will ensure better targeting of the neediest people than outsiders can achieve with crude proxy indicators and limited local knowledge. However, community-based targeting fails to take account of power dynamics within the community, which can result in "elite capture" of external resources and the (deliberate or inadvertent) exclusion of certain marginalised groups (e.g. members of minority clans).

There were many complaints of bias and appropriation of food aid by people within communities who have responsibility for allocating it. ('When the food aid reaches the elders they take half of it and the rest disappears: we don't know where it goes.') In one informal IDP camp on the outskirts of Gode town, a poor family told us they have never received any food aid, even though regular deliveries are made to the camp: 'Only those with relatives in the committee distributing food get food.'[134] Women in Doboweyn claimed that the allocation of food aid within communities is done by men, an arrangement which they felt was unfair in several ways. First, 'women understand better than men who are the destitute and disabled in our community'.[135] Second, they accuse those responsible for food distribution with diverting much of it for their personal use, and even selling some in Doboweyn town. Third, these men were accused of favouring members of their clan and close friends in food aid distribution, thereby denying the neediest who usually come from less powerful clans.

15.2.3 From households to individuals

A final reason for the failure of food aid to reach individuals who are the intended beneficiaries (such as undernourished children) relates to decisions taken within the household about how this food is allocated. Such decisions might reflect a rational utilisation of household resources for the benefit of all family members, or they could be described as a "misuse" of scarce resources by powerful household members that deprives weaker household members of essential food.

Some women complained that their husbands squander food aid by selling it (e.g. for *khat*), but they blamed the distribution system for handing this food to men, rather than to women who are responsible for feeding the children.

> Our problem is that the men always get the food aid. When my husband gets it, he sells half and uses the money to buy *khat*. It would be better if the food is given to the women, since food is our responsibility. There isn't a single woman who would sell food aid to buy *khat*. If she sells, it will be to buy other food items for the home, especially the children.[136]

134 Life history interview, Sagarabuur IDP camp, Gode.

135 Women's focus group, Doboweyn.

136 A woman in rural Gashamo.

15.3 Receipts of safety-net transfers

Table 15.2 shows the proportion of households in each of our 11 districts that received food aid in each of the last three years. In total, just over two-thirds of households received some food aid in 2004/5 (n=749/1,093 =68.5 per cent), Slightly fewer numbers had received food aid in 2003/4, and significantly fewer in 2002/3 (just over one-third of households), which is consistent with DPPC figures on trends in metric tons of food aid allocated to Somali Region (compare with Table 15.1).

Comparing across districts, urban residents of Jigjiga and Gode are highly unlikely to receive food aid (less than one in ten) and are much less likely to receive food aid than households in any rural community. This is an indicator of good outreach to rural areas. Five out of nine rural districts – Shinile, Dolo Odo, rural Jigjiga, Cherati and Doboweyn – enjoyed almost blanket coverage, with more than 90 per cent of households getting some food aid in 2004/5. Surprisingly, both Gashamo and Kebribayah, despite being worst affected by the 2004 drought, had lower than average coverage among rural districts (where access to food aid averaged 82 per cent). Kebribayah (43 per cent) was the only rural district where less than half the households surveyed received food aid in the previous year.

In most cases, households that received food aid in the past year (2004/5) had been given two allocations, though some had only one and a few had received three rations. In previous years, too, each beneficiary received only one, two or (at most) three allocations over the year. This infrequency of delivery raises questions about the effectiveness of the food aid programme in Somali Region as a safety net intervention, and how much impact on household food security it can possibly achieve. Since the trends in numbers of food aid recipients year on year are fairly consistent across districts, this suggests that this is a regular general food distribution programme at the regional level, rather than a flexible response to local needs assessments that scale up or down as local conditions change from year to year. This conclusion accords with findings from a study of food aid targeting in Ethiopia, which found that the main determinant of food aid deliveries to a region is whether that region had received food aid the previous year (Clay, Molla and Habtewold 1999) – institutional momentum and established pipelines dictate food aid allocations more than localised estimates of food deficits and household consumption needs.

Notwithstanding the possibility that food aid deliveries may be relatively predictable and regular, concerns about their limited effectiveness are compounded by evidence on the relatively small amounts of food aid actually received by our sample households. The final column in Table 15.2 shows the kilograms of staple cereal (wheat) received by each household each time they were given a food ration in 2004/5. The mean of 14kg is very low – the median is close to 10kg – and only in one district (drought-affected Gashamo) does the average exceed 20kg. Doubling the average ration to allow for two rations per year gives an annual food transfer per household of 28kg – an almost trivial amount, certainly not enough for anyone to live on and not enough even to make much impact on household food security. This 28kg amounts to just 15 per cent of our estimated allocation (from DPPC data – see Table 15.1) of 184kg per beneficiary in 2004. Where did all this food aid go?

Two explanations can be suggested for this anomaly. The first is that food aid is being informally redistributed among a much wider group than the targeted beneficiaries – which amounts to approximately 25 per cent of the regional population (Table 15.1) – while over 80 per cent of households in our rural survey reported receiving food aid in 2004/5. In many instances it appears that all food aid delivered to the community was divided among all households, rather than being allocated to the poorest members of the community.[137] As a result, the rations that each household received were greatly reduced. The second explanation relates to problems of food aid distribution, as described above: diversion of food by officials, or appropriation of food by community leaders. The effect of both is a

137 One problem with community-based targeting is that communities are often reluctant to select "the poorest 20" (say), and to exclude everyone else. To avoid the social tensions that this can provoke, communities sometimes decide instead to divide external resources equally among everyone.

Table 15.2 **Household receipts of food aid, by district**

District	Received this year (2004/5)	Received last year (2003/4)	Received 2 years ago (2002/3)	Amount (kg) of food received (2004/5)
Pastoralist	**84%**	**78%**	**42%**	**20.9**
Gashamo	77%	72%	4%	29.2
Shilabo	78%	63%	40%	18.3
Shinile	97%	98%	82%	15.1
Agro-pastoral	**75%**	**61%**	**28%**	**12.2**
Kebribayah	43%	28%	8%	18.0
Doboweyn	90%	89%	44%	12.8
Cherati	93%	68%	33%	5.7
Farming	**88%**	**83%**	**59%**	**10.5**
Jigjiga rural	94%	89%	84%	10.1
Kelafo	75%	66%	31%	13.8
Dolo Odo	96%	94%	63%	7.7
Urban	**7%**	**4%**	**5%**	**14.4**
Jigjiga town	10%	6%	6%	13.8
Gode	3%	1%	3%	15.0
Total/Mean	**68.5%**	**61.1%**	**35.9%**	**13.9**
No. of households	**749**	**668**	**392**	**749**

Source: Household survey data (n=1,093).

reversal of the intended food aid targeting outcome: instead of 26 per cent of the population receiving 184kg each, our survey finds that 69 per cent of the population received just 28kg each.

The questionnaire also asked if the household had received a range of other safety-net transfers during the previous year, including: food-for-work, cash-for-work, *faffa* (supplementary food for young children) seeds and tools, livestock (restocking), cash transfers and microcredit. There were no positive responses on any of these programmes, with two exceptions: 11 respondents in Shinile reported participating in a cash-for-work project (no cash-for-work was mentioned in any other district), and seven households in Gashamo and four in Kebribayah reported receiving *faffa*, presumably as an emergency response to the recent drought in those two districts.

This suggests that safety nets or social protection programming for Somali Region is remarkably undiversified and unimaginative, being driven almost exclusively by general distributions of food aid. In highland Ethiopia food aid is also dominant (though this is changing with the introduction of cash transfers on the Productive Safety Net Programme, launched in January 2005), but the delivery instruments include food-for-work – completely absent in Somali Region – as well as "gratuitous relief".

15.4 Uses of food aid

Although most food aid is reportedly consumed at home by the beneficiaries and their families, some of it is not, for one of two reasons: either it is not liked (the food provided is not preferred), or it is not needed (people have more pressing priorities than food). In the first case, families that need food aid but do not like what they are given usually exchange it (by barter or

sale and purchase) for other food crops. A second reason for selling food aid is to raise cash for non-food expenses. Recipients often sell some or all of their food aid to meet their cash needs – not all of which (e.g. *khat*) is necessarily in the best interests of the household.

Much of the food aid that is sold is immediately converted into preferred local cereals – maize or sorghum – or other food items. ('Because we don't like the wheat, I sell it to get money for other necessities like sugar.') Although this is a rational and understandable way of converting an unpopular food into an acceptable alternative, because there is little demand for *qamadi*[138] (food aid wheat) the price is low and the terms of trade with other foods are unfavourable. One kilogram of *qamadi* typically buys about two-thirds of a kilogram of local wheat. Moreover, the price of food aid fluctuates with place, demand, supply and seasonality. In Warder in October 2004, a 50kg bag of food aid was worth 120 Birr, but by December the selling price had fallen to only 35 Birr. This is therefore a very inefficient way of transferring either food or income to poor and vulnerable people.

Because *qamadi* is deeply unpopular, other beneficiaries simply feed this wheat to their animals, so that there is no direct impact on human food consumption at all. 'We could not eat it because it was dry and hard to eat. So we gave it to our livestock.'; 'Some people give it to their goats. I don't have any goats, otherwise I'd also give it to the animals.'[139] Especially during the dry season and in drought periods, food aid can provide a useful source of feed for livestock. A mature female camel (*hasha*) might be fed 3–4kg of wheat a day. Though this might seem an extravagant use of food intended for human consumption, at this feeding rate the camels will give milk, and it can sustain livestock through the drought period. This use of food aid to sustain animals through drought periods may also point to the potential for a market in subsidised hay and fodder. In districts like Gashamo, in north-eastern Somali Region, a brisk market already exists in the trucking of water for livestock during the dry season.

15.5 Beneficiary tastes and preferences

The food aid distributed in Somali Region is mostly dry wheat flour in 50kg bags, known by locals as *qamadi*. As noted, most people in Somali Region strongly dislike the taste of this "foreign wheat", and find it hard to eat. 'We don't get nutritious food, only wheat flour which is too dry for human consumption'; 'I have a baby who I can't feed wheat'. There is a perception that this wheat might be preferred by "highlanders", but is not appropriate for Somalis: 'We don't like the wheat that we receive as food aid. We are not Highlanders! Maybe they like it, but we don't.'[140]

Instead of *qamadi*, most people expressed a preference for rice or pasta, or even local wheat. They are also very dissatisfied with the lack of diversity of food aid. (In fact, beans and cooking oil are also distributed, but in smaller quantities and less frequently than wheat flour.)

> Instead of wheat, we'd prefer other things like rice, sugar, everything good like normal people; maybe even biscuits occasionally! Just because we are poor, doesn't mean we don't like such food, or that we don't like a variety of foods.[141]
>
> People need a variety of foods to live; the government needs to know what foods people need and like, and not just give them what they think. We have never been able to tell the government what we prefer.[142]

One woman went further, accusing the government of being indifferent to the likes and dislikes of the Somali people. On the other hand, it is true that delivering less preferred

138 *Qamadi* literally means 'wheat', but has become a derogatory term for imported food aid wheat.

139 A woman in Gashamo town.

140 A woman in rural Gashamo.

141 A woman in Gashamo town.

142 A widow in rural Gashamo.

"inferior" foods during a food crisis can be an effective self-targeting mechanism. If the "really poor people" are eating *qamadi* rather than selling it or feeding it to their animals, this is a sign that the transfer is reaching at least some of the most vulnerable.

> The really poor people are forced to eat *qamadi* even though we Somalis don't like it. But the government thinks that because we are poor, we shouldn't get the food we prefer, and we should be happy with whatever they give us.[143]

Some respondents are aware that food aid in Somaliland is provided in the form of locally preferred foods such as rice, pasta and oil, and they question why they cannot be given the same. Another popular request was for humanitarian assistance to be provided in the form of cash, as this is more flexible and allows beneficiaries greater choice. ('I would prefer to receive other food like rice, or better still, to get cash.') This opinion gives some support to the shift in the current Productive Safety Net Programme, away from food aid for the "predictably food insecure" and towards unconditional cash transfers. 'The best is to give money so that people can decide themselves what to buy. Also, with money people can send their children to school, and they can also help others in need with loans, and so on.'[144]

15.6 Alternatives to food aid

Many pastoralists, interviewed in the aftermath of the drought of 2004, argued against continued deliveries of emergency food aid, and in favour of assistance that would usually be classified as "rehabilitation" (e.g. restocking) or "developmental safety nets" (e.g. employment opportunities). 'What we need is help with reconstructing the livelihood we used to live – not food aid. Restocking, veterinary facilities, health care, employment opportunities, education for our children – that's what is important to us.'[145]

The argument for restocking was made mainly by men. Women often questioned the logic of restocking as a safety net or rehabilitation intervention, given the drought-proneness of Somali Region, and argued instead for support to diversify their livelihoods away from pastoralism.

> Maybe it is a waste of money and time to restock in this region, when there are always going to be droughts. It's like throwing money away. Instead, we all, women and men, need help with alternative activities so that we can stop depending on pastoralism only.[146]

> Women and men have different needs. I'm sure our men will tell you we need restocking. It is true that is important, but that is what the men need, it isn't what women need. We will tell you we need schools and a health centre and credit. We would also like assistance to start projects that will generate an income and get us markets.[147]

In farming and agro-pastoralist communities, complaints about the inappropriateness of food aid were equally common and vociferous, and requests for alternative forms of assistance were dominated by agricultural inputs and access to markets. 'What we need is farm tools, help with diggers to plough our lands, seeds and fertilisers, and market for our produce – not food handouts!'[148]

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143 A woman in rural Gashamo.

144 A widow in rural Gashamo.

145 A male pastoralist in Gashamo.

146 A woman in rural Gashamo.

147 A woman in rural Gashamo.

148 A male agro-pastoralist in Kebribayah.

16 Health services

This chapter reviews survey evidence on causes of death in Somali Region, and concludes that the majority of these deaths are preventable. Failures of the public health service are responsible for thousands of premature deaths every year, and the limited accessibility and poor quality of health services, especially for people living in rural Somali Region, are clearly demonstrated.

16.1 Causes of death in Somali Region

Mortality data from the household survey have been discussed in earlier chapters, but here we consider the causes of deaths reported by respondents. The most common cause was described as a short or long-term illness (58 per cent). It was not possible in the survey to identify the nature of fatal illness or disease. There is no way of telling, for instance, how many of these deaths from illness are AIDS-related. Illness was followed by death in childbirth (23 per cent), malnutrition (8 per cent) and old age (5 per cent). Smaller numbers of deaths were attributed to accidents, snake bite or attacks by wild animals, famine – which respondents mentioned separately from malnutrition – and conflict, where conflict-related deaths include two fatalities from landmine explosions (Table 16.1).

If deaths due to old age or illness can be described as deaths from "natural causes" – while recognising that a large proportion of deaths from illness are preventable (and should have been prevented) – it follows that three in five deaths reported (n=585/935 =62 per cent) were "natural". This leaves a strikingly high proportion of deaths (n=354/935 =38 per cent) that could be described as "unnatural" and premature (i.e. deaths in childbirth, deaths from malnutrition, famine, accidents and conflict), in addition to deaths from preventable illness and disease (Figure 16.1).

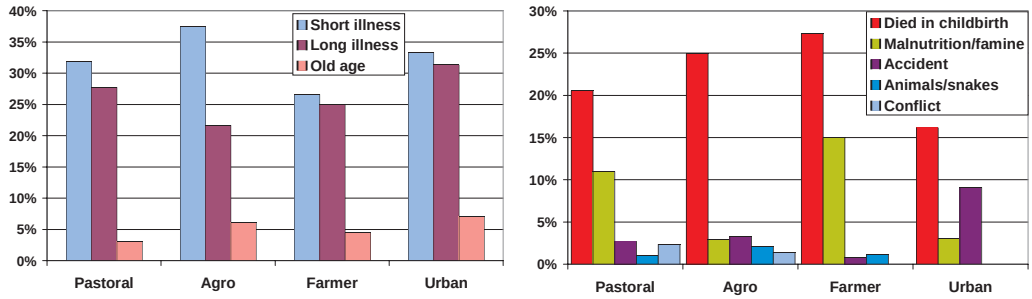
The rates of premature and preventable mortality are shockingly high: according to this survey evidence, five times as many people die in childbirth as die peacefully in old age in Somali Region. Deaths of mothers and babies in childbirth accounted for almost a quarter of all deaths reported (n=218/935 =23.2 per cent), and almost two-thirds (n=218/354 =62 per cent) of "unnatural" deaths – those that were not attributed to illness or old age. This is an indictment of the limited availability and poor quality of reproductive health services in Somali Region. It also reflects the generally poor health and nutrition status of women in the region, which raises the risks of complications during pregnancy and in labour. Some plausible reasons for this state of affairs were provided by one midwife interviewed in Gashamo town (Box 16.1). The most important factor mentioned is the inadequate diet of women, especially during pregnancy, which weakens themselves and their babies, often fatally. Evidence from

Table 16.1 **Causes of death in Somali Region**

Cause of death	Pastoral	Agro-pastoral	Farmer	Urban	Total deaths
Short illness	93 (32%)	104 (38%)	71 (27%)	33 (33%)	301 (32.2%)
Long illness	81 (28%)	60 (22%)	67 (25%)	31 (31%)	239 (25.6%)
Died in childbirth*	60 (21%)	69 (25%)	73 (27%)	16 (16%)	218 (23.3%)
Malnutrition	29 (10%)	8 (3%)	32 (12%)	3 (3%)	72 (7.7%)
Old age	9 (3%)	17 (6%)	12 (4%)	7 (7%)	45 (4.8%)
Accident	8 (3%)	9 (3%)	2 (1%)	9 (9%)	28 (3.0%)
Snake bite/wild animal	3 (1%)	6 (2%)	3 (1%)	0 (0%)	12 (1.3%)
Conflict	7 (2%)	4 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (1.2%)
Famine	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	7 (3%)	0 (0%)	9 (1.0%)
Total	**292 (100%)**	**277 (100%)**	**267 (100%)**	**99 (100%)**	**935 (100%)**

* 'Died in childbirth' includes both mothers and babies.
Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

Figure 16.1 **Deaths from natural and unnatural causes, 1992–2004**



famines elsewhere suggests the risks of miscarriages, stillbirths and maternal mortality increase during drought episodes, as maternal nutrition is compromised. There is also substantial evidence that undernourished mothers deliver low birth-weight babies, and since low birth-weight is a contributory cause of stunted physical growth and impaired cognitive development in later life, this contributes to inter-generational transmission of poverty. One policy implication from this literature is that it is vital to invest in the nutrition of adolescent girls and young women, to break the cycle of mother-to-child poverty.

Deaths from natural causes (illness and old age) are highest in urban areas, while deaths from unnatural causes are highest in rural areas. All deaths due to snakes or wild animals, conflict and famine, and 96 per cent of deaths attributed to malnutrition, occurred in rural areas (Table 16.1). Most of the famine deaths, and almost half the deaths from malnutrition, were recorded in farming communities, with a concentration in Kelafo District, which was badly affected by the drought-famine of 2000. Interestingly, one-third of deaths caused by accidents occurred in Gode and Jigjiga town, probably reflecting the hazards of urban life, such as motor cars and electricity.

16.2 Access to health services

In recent years the government of Ethiopia has invested heavily in improving public services in Somali Region, especially health and education facilities. To date, though, urban residents still enjoy better access to basic services, such as clinics and schools, than do rural communities. This finding is hardly surprising. All over the world, densely settled urban communities tend to be better provided with basic services, because large numbers of people living in close proximity allows for economies of scale and cost-effective delivery. It can also be difficult to persuade doctors, nurses and teachers – who have usually been trained in towns and cities – to relocate to rural areas which offer few of the comforts of urban living. This issue has constrained the delivery of public services, and the implementation of decentralisation programmes, throughout Africa.

What is surprising is the extent to which rural residents of Somali Region are deprived of access to essential public services. In the case of health facilities, the "access gap" between urban and rural provision is almost a mirror image. While 96 per cent of urban households in our survey answered 'yes' to the question 'Is there a health clinic in your community?' and only 4 per cent answered 'no', in rural areas only 6 per cent answered 'yes' while 94 per cent said 'no' (Table 16.2). Even the 6 per cent of affirmative replies are slightly misleading, because the figure for Shilabo is unusually high among rural districts, at 28 per cent. In five out of nine rural districts, 100 per cent of respondents reported that there is no health facility in their community at all. In other rural districts, a clinic was found in one or two communities of the many communities visited. In Kelafo District, for instance, 16 per cent of households have access to a clinic, but elsewhere in the same district, a community discussion revealed that a population of over 10,000 people in Afdub and neighbouring villages do not have a single clinic. Participants in this discussion highlighted this problem and made an urgent appeal for a clinic, arguing that: 'Because there is no health facility here, most people rely on religious healers.'[149]

149 A woman in Kelafo District.

Box 16.1 **Case study: midwife, Gashamo town**

'There are three midwives here, but I'm the most experienced. I have delivered 150 babies. The saddest thing is when the baby is delivered stillborn. I have had some women who have died in childbirth, and that is also very sad. The main reason for women dying like this is because they are too thin and work too hard until they have the baby. Especially in the bush, you see women who are very thin, who have very little to eat, so they aren't strong enough to deliver the baby. Other times, even if the baby is born alive, it is so small when it is born because the mother hasn't good and enough food during her pregnancy. Sometimes, then, the baby also dies because it is so under-nourished and small. Then, the mother also doesn't have enough breast milk to feed it, so it can't really survive. Because there have been so many droughts in the last few years, 95 per cent of women's nutrition is very bad. They tell me they give their share of any food to their children, and only have a little bit. If not, they give most of the food to their husbands.

'We midwives don't charge for our services, but the families do give us something – anything they can afford. Sometimes, instead of the women giving me something, I have to give them something, like food, because I can see how poor she and her family is. I can see if I don't give her something, she will die, because she is so thin.'

Source: Case study interview, midwife, Gashamo town.

In rural Dolo Odo District, no communities visited have a health centre of any kind, and people complained about the lack of health-care professionals. Malaria and tuberculosis were named as the most prevalent diseases in these riverine farming communities, followed by water-borne diseases. According to a local key informant: 'Since clear and clean water is not available, the people are using river water. This reduces human productivity and quality of life.'[150]

Table 16.2 **Access to health facilities, by district**

District	Health clinic in community (%)	No health clinic (%)	Distance to nearest clinic (km)*	Immunised children
Pastoralist	**12**	**88**	**36**	**236 (24.4%)**
Gashamo	8	92	n/a	57 (33.3%)
Shilabo	28	72	38	62 (12.4%)
Shinile	0	100	33	117 (27.5%)
Agro-pastoral	**2**	**98**	**26**	**232 (19.6%)**
Kebribayah	6	94	n/a	38 (18.9%)
Doboweyn	0	100	17	73 (15.6%)
Cherati	0	100	35	121 (24.4%)
Farming	**5**	**95**	**14**	**298 (35.4%)**
Jigjiga rural	0	100	1	94 (38.5%)
Kelafo	16	84	18	69 (31.8%)
Dolo Odo	0	100	13	135 (36.0%)
Urban	**96**	**4**	**1**	**297 (49.4%)**
Jigjiga town	95	5	1	132 (64.7%)
Gode	97	3	1	165 (34.0%)
Total	**23%**	**77%**	**21km**	**1,063 (30.6%)**

* Distance = median estimated distance in kilometres, if no clinic in local community.
Source: Household survey data (n=1,098).

150 An elder in Dolo Odo District.

Box 16.2 **Case study: midwife, Shilabo District**

Tamad Buran is a 40-year-old woman with eight children. Two of her sons are boarders at schools in Kebridahar and Shilabo town. Tamad lives with her husband and their six other children in Lasoole, Shilabo District. The children look after their 30 sheep and goats. Tamad's father was a pastoralist, but his animals were inherited by his brother, leaving Tamad with nothing. Apart from her domestic responsibilities, Tamad works as a midwife and a tea-stall owner, selling tea to pastoralists who come to Lasoole to water their animals, and to travellers going to Kebridahar and Shilabo. Tamad's mother was also a midwife.

Tamad holds a midwifery certificate from Kabridahar hospital, having attended a three-month course. The training covered the administration of local anaesthetic, stitching, and provision of blades and gloves to minimise risks. However, Tamad uses no tools or equipment in her service, except for sterilised gloves that she gets for free from Shilabo clinic. She gets no other assistance from the government or development agencies. Tamad does not charge for the service she provides but people offer her payment in kind, with "gifts" of cloth, sugar, or sometimes a sheep or goat.

On average, Tamad helps deliver about 30 babies a year. When performing deliveries, complications sometimes arise – babies die in childbirth, or women bleed profusely and lose dangerous amounts of blood. Women whose lives are at risk are transported by camel or vehicle (if one is available), either to Kebridahar hospital, about 70km from Lasoole, or to Shilabo clinic, 16km away.

Source: Case study interview, midwife, Lasoole, Shilabo District.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to estimate the distance to the nearest health facility. Although the actual distances given in Table 16.2 may not be accurate, there is a clear gradient between livelihood systems. Pastoralist communities claimed to be furthest from a health clinic (on average, 36km), followed by agro-pastoralists (26km), then farmers (14km), with urban households being closest to a clinic or hospital (usually within 1km). In communities that are located close to Somalia or Somaliland, many households reported going across the border for treatment, because these are the closest health facilities available to them and access is not restricted to local citizens. 'They treat us nicely and we get cured.'

The specific dangers for women of not having access to reproductive health care were identified in relation to deaths in childbirth, as discussed above.

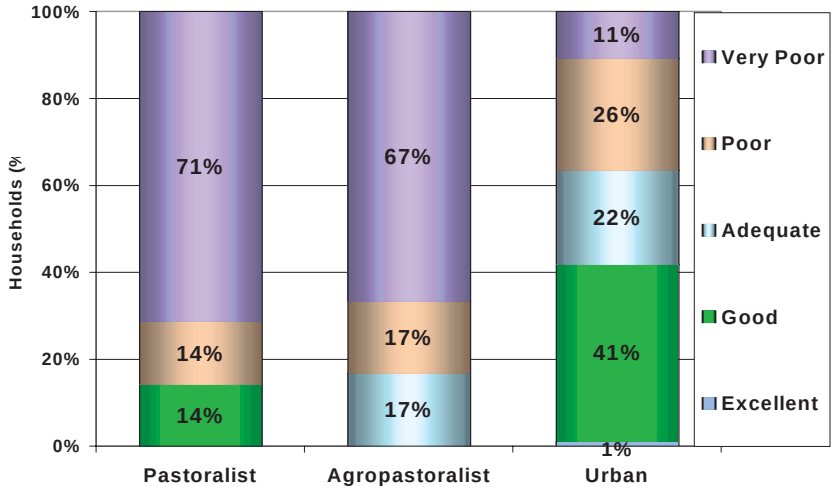
> We don't have a health centre here. Many women die when they have complications in childbirth. Every few weeks, a woman from this area has such complications and some do die. The young girls see this and say they want to live in town so they can have access to hospital when they give birth.[151]

It is encouraging that many children in Somali Region have been vaccinated, even where health centres are not located in their vicinity. This is because there are mobile vaccination teams that tour the region, announcing in advance when they will be visiting each community or settlement, and mothers are generally keen to have their children immunised. 'There are mobile teams that visit the communities for vaccinations, like National Immunisation Day, and the campaign against polio. There is also the Eye Mobile.'[152] Across our 1,100 survey households, almost one in three children have been vaccinated (n=1,063/3,478 =30.6 per cent). Most of these children have been vaccinated two or three times, against polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT), and tuberculosis (BCG vaccine). On the other hand, immunisation coverage is far from comprehensive, ranging

151 A woman in rural Gashamo.

152 An agro-pastoralist parent in Kebribayah.

Figure 16.2 **Perceived quality of health services, Somali Region**



Source: Household survey data (n=294).

from half of urban children (49.4 per cent) to just one in five agro-pastoralist children (19.6 per cent) in our survey (Table 16.2). The two districts with the lowest immunisation coverage – Shilabo (12.4 per cent) and Doboweyn (15.6 per cent) – are also the two districts with the highest scores on our 'instability index' (as discussed in Chapter 10). This is significant because it follows that other districts that are more insecure (and were not covered by our household survey, sometimes for this reason) probably have even lower outreach from mobile immunisation services.

Apart from physical accessibility, another constraint to uptake of health services is their cost ("financial access"). Vaccinations are given free of charge, but seeking treatment at clinics is expensive. According to respondents in Jigjiga town, there is a 20 Birr consultation fee just to go to the clinic. The cost of treatment or drugs varies depending on the illness, but is rarely less than 25 Birr and can be as high as 250 Birr. There is also a range of informal health service providers – traditional healers, midwives, circumcisers and Koranic healers – whose charges are variable, but are either lower than formal health providers or at least negotiable.

Some households are resorting to traditional medicines because they cannot afford the price of drugs at clinics. ('We are using traditional health treatments because we cannot afford to go to the clinic, because of financial problems.') The recent droughts may well have contributed to this process of reverting to less effective but cheaper sources of health care. This would only have compounded the health problems associated with the drought, however, and suggests a strong case for protecting access to affordable health care at all times, but especially in emergencies.

16.3 Quality of health services

The quality of health services in rural areas of Somali Region is considered by local residents to be much poorer than health facilities in urban areas. In the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities of Gashamo and Kebribayah Districts, over 80 per cent of households interviewed rated local health services (where these were available) as 'very poor' or 'poor', compared to 37 per cent of households in Jigjiga town, where 42 per cent of respondents described their health services as 'good' or 'excellent', against 14 per cent in Gashamo and no households at all in Kebribayah (Figure 16.2).[153]

Although the provision of clinics, doctors and drugs appears to be inadequate in both quantity and quality throughout most of Somali Region, some complementary health

153 Since this question was only asked in three districts during the first leg of fieldwork, these findings should be regarded as indicative rather than representative of Somali Region.

Box 16.3 **Case study: HIV/AIDS women's group, Gode town**

Since the year 2000, when it became apparent that several members of the local community were displaying symptoms of HIV/AIDS, women's groups have been established in each kebele of Gode District. Seminars were held to sensitise the community and training was provided for the groups. Among other things, the groups organise seminars to raise awareness on the causes and dangers of HIV/AIDS to individuals, their families and society. They visit schools and weddings, organise plays and distribute information posters and free condoms. They also provide a special diet for those affected, if their families lack the means. Orphaned children are referred to SOS Children's Homes. These groups receive assistance from government, private businesses and food aid distributors.

A discussion with one HIV/AIDS women's group in Gode town revealed that the spread of AIDS in Somali Region is believed to be caused mainly by negative attitudes and behaviour. The disease is seen as a taboo and is rarely acknowledged by those infected with HIV or their relatives, for fear of stigmatisation. Initially, denial was also based on a false perception: 'We used to think the disease was common only among non-Muslims.' According to these women, awareness is improving but so is HIV-prevalence, mainly because of high levels of promiscuity and resistance to condom use. 'The message is getting across but still people are not taking prevention measures. Some of the affected do not disclose their status and continue spreading the disease.'

Prostitution also spreads the disease, and the problem of prostitution was blamed on "highlanders" who have migrated to Gode, as well as IDPs and refugees from Somalia. The women also pointed out that the problem of HIV/AIDS is most common among young men aged 16 to 40. This group consumes a great deal of *khat*, a stimulant that reputedly induces feelings of euphoria and sexual desire. Poverty and recurrent droughts are also blamed for accelerating HIV transmission indirectly. 'There is so much poverty now as a result of successive droughts, and this causes women to engage in prostitution so as to make ends meet.'

Source: Qualitative survey focus group discussion, Gode town.

services seem to be performing rather better. A case in point is the HIV/AIDS groups that have been established by the government's HIV/AIDS Secretariat and the Education Bureau, with support from international NGOs. These groups aim to raise awareness and provide direct assistance to people affected by HIV and AIDS in Somali Region (Box 16.3). Though their coverage is limited to date, they are performing an important function and are expected to extend to other communities in the future.

17 Education

Pastoralist communities across the world face problems in accessing education services, partly because of their high mobility together with the low population density of arid areas, which makes the delivery of public services logistically complex and more expensive than in densely settled sedentary communities, but partly because pastoralists tend to be politically marginalised, and so have little power to influence government spending allocations. Somali Region in Ethiopia is no exception. This chapter first presents evidence of poor education outcomes, in the form of low self-reported literacy rates. Next we examine the main supply-side cause of low literacy rates, namely inadequate provision of schools. Several demand-side factors also determine education outcomes, including parental attitudes towards educating their children (which are significantly gendered), costs of education, and perceptions about the quality of education services provided.

Table 17.1 **Literacy rates, by district and gender**

District	Gross literacy (%)*	Literacy rate (%)**	Male literacy rate (%)	Female literacy rate (%)
Pastoralist	**12.0**	**13.7**	**22.7**	**4.8**
Gashamo	7.6	9.9	15.5	4.4
Shilabo	17.2	19.0	33.8	5.2
Shinile	10.7	13.0	20.7	4.9
Agro-pastoral	**11.3**	**11.4**	**19.6**	**3.6**
Kebribayah	9.2	8.1	12.4	3.8
Doboweyn	8.3	11.8	23.2	1.2
Cherati	15.9	14.3	23.1	6.3
Farming	**10.4**	**12.5**	**19.8**	**5.1**
Jigjiga rural	12.4	15.4	22.9	7.0
Kelafo	9.0	10.6	16.4	5.1
Dolo Odo	10.0	12.1	20.8	3.2
Urban	**49.5**	**49.9**	**67.6**	**32.9**
Jigjiga town	55.0	47.6	65.9	30.8
Gode	44.7	52.8	69.8	35.8
Total	**18.2**	**19.5**	**29.5**	**9.8**

* Gross literacy = percentage of individuals able to read and write in total population.
** 'Literacy rate = percentage of individuals able to read and write in population aged 15 and above.
Source: Household survey data (n=8,817).

17.1 Literacy

The questionnaire survey included a self-reported question on basic literacy for every household member ('Are you/he/she able to read and write?'). Out of the total population of 8,817 people in the 1,200 surveyed households, 18.2 per cent (n=1,605) were able to read and write at the time of the survey, and 81.8 per cent (n=7,212) could not. As might be expected, literacy is much higher in urban areas than rural areas. In Jigjiga town, over half of the surveyed population (55 per cent) said that they can read and write, while in Gode town, the figure was just under half (45 per cent). In rural districts, by contrast, literacy rates are extremely low, with less than one person in ten able to read and write in Gashamo (7.6 per cent), Doboweyn (8.3 per cent), Kelafo (9.0 per cent, and Kebribayah (9.2 per cent) (Table 17.1).

The prevalence of illiteracy is not significantly different between districts that are dominated by pastoralists (12 per cent literacy), agro-pastoralists (11 per cent) and farmers (10 per cent). It is intriguing that farming communities report such low literacy rates, given the argument that it is impossible to provide mobile groups of pastoralists with schools and clinics. Clearly, other factors must explain the inadequate provision of education facilities to farmers in Somali Region, among these being the marginalisation of ethnic Bantu within the region. As one official told us, people who live in distant localities and have little political voice 'demand less and complain less'. In the July 2005 regional budget debate, the problem of unequal disbursement of public resources between *woredas* was recognised, and steps were taken to ensure that fair amounts were allocated to each *woreda*.

Apart from the urban–rural divide, the most striking differences in literacy rates are by gender. On average across our sample, three times as many adult males (29.5 per cent, or almost one in three) as adult females (9.8 per cent, or less than one in ten) can read and

write. In urban areas the ratio is two to one (68 per cent of males and 33 per cent of females over 15 years old), but in rural areas the ratio is between four to one and five to one (20–23 per cent of males versus just 4–5 per cent of females). Female literacy rates are as low as 1.2 per cent in Doboweyn and 3.2 per cent in Dolo Odo. The highest rates for female literacy are just 6.3 per cent in Cherati and 7 per cent in rural Jigjiga. While the low literacy rates overall suggest problems with accessing education throughout rural Somali Region, the male–female differentials suggest that limited supply of education services is compounded by limited demand for educating girls. Both these "supply failure" and "demand failure" factors are considered below.

17.2 Access to education

Several parents interviewed for this study expressed a strong preference for educating their children, and equally strong frustration at their inability to do so, due to failures in the delivery of education services. 'Our children are our assets and educating them is our priority: but where are the schools?'[154] It is certainly true that the federal and regional government has made efforts in recent years to extend access to education services in Somali Region, including building more schools, experimenting with mobile education services, and supporting NGO efforts to provide alternative basic education. Mobile schools and NGO initiatives are important in pastoralist areas, given the difficulties that the Ministry of Education faces in persuading teachers to live in remote communities. Low education levels are also self-reinforcing: where illiteracy rates are high the pool of potential teachers is very small.

Many children throughout rural Somali Region are sent to Koranic schools instead of to formal schools, either because parents choose this form of education for their children or, more often than not, because no other choice is available. ('There is no school here, only one Koranic school.') In Kelafo District, a women's focus group told us that they would send their daughters to school if there was one, but since the only education accessible to this community is provided by one Koranic teacher, they send their sons and daughters to him instead. A typical village visited in Shilabo District has no school except for the informal Koranic school, where enrolment is over a hundred students. Some Koranic schools do teach other subjects apart from Arabic and the Koran. Of course, since it is an Islamic duty to teach children the Koran, many parents continue sending their children to Koranic teachers (e.g. as evening classes, or as a pre-school for very young children) even where formal schools are available.

In some communities, school buildings have been constructed but the school is not functioning because of a lack of teachers. In rural Gashamo these are known jokingly as "hyena schools" because wild animals live in the empty buildings at night. ('Only hyenas study there!') In places where schools are functioning, parents complain about shortages of qualified teachers. Even in Gode town, where there are several formal schools providing better quality education than in rural areas, lack of specialist teachers means that certain subjects are not taught (see Box 17.1).

Some participants in a community discussion in Shilabo District send their children to live with relatives in urban areas, specifically so that they can attend school. This is not an unusual way of ensuring access to formal education for children, but it does depend on having relatives based in town who are willing to take in children for extended periods.

Another alternative to building schools throughout rural Somali Region is to provide boarding schools to which children can be sent, while their parents continue to pursue their pastoralist lifestyle. Parents are often more reluctant to risk sending their daughters to boarding school than their sons (as discussed below), and this may partly explain the gender differentials in education participation and outcomes reported above. Another reservation is that boarding schools are more expensive than day schools, because boarders must be provided with accommodation and meals.

154 An agro-pastoralist parent in Kebribayah.

Box 17.1 **Case study: school headmaster, Gode town**

This school in Gode town is 30 years old. It was first constructed as an intermediate school, but ten years ago a new wing was added that serves as a high school. There are currently 1,252 students, only 220 (17.6 per cent) of whom are girls. Most of the students come from pastoral backgrounds, followed by agro-pastoral families and traders. Only 5 per cent of the students are not Somalis. Enrolment has been rising, but there is a bias towards boys (a 20 per cent rise in recent years) rather than girls (a 5 per cent increase). Increasing enrolment rates reflect the community's growing recognition that education is empowering people at all levels. 'They appreciate it when they see an ethnic Somali administrator, doctor, nurse, teacher or bureau head.' The headmaster explained the low girl enrolment in terms of Somali cultural practices that include early marriage of daughters and parents prioritising the education of sons. The school is trying to redress this imbalance through awareness-raising to highlight the benefits that derive from female education. The headmaster believes that society's attitudes towards educating girls are changing, which explains why female enrolment is increasing, albeit at a slower rate.

There are 35 teachers at this school – all men. According to the headmaster, female trainee teachers typically fail to attain the minimum qualifications required to teach. Also, to qualify to train, one must possess at least a high school certificate, and there are fewer Somali girls than boys graduating from high school, so the pool of potential female teachers is much smaller. Training is conducted at the Teacher Training Institute in Jigjiga and the Alemaya University Correspondence School. Because of generally low levels of education in Somali Region, the school faces teacher shortages and some subjects have no teaching staff at all. Subjects taught at the school include Somali, English, Amharic, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Geography, History and Civic Education.

Shortages of teachers are compounded by a heavy and growing demand for places at the school.

'We are overwhelmed by applications for enrolment and we have already gone overboard as most classes accommodate three times the usual number. There are shortages of teachers, classrooms, lack of science laboratory, text books, library – you name it!'

Source: Key informant interview, Gode town.

> The nearest school is in Gashamo town. There aren't any children from here in school. If we want them to go to school, we will have to send them to boarding school. If there was a school nearby, we could send them because they would be staying at home, so we won't have all the extra expenses of boarding school.[155]

The shortage of schools in rural Somali Region may be understandable, given the low density and high mobility of the region's population, but it is a source of many complaints.

Interestingly, some communities with no formal education services are taking the initiative and mobilising resources for education from among their members, relatives abroad, or by lobbying NGOs. During fieldwork for this project, for example, members of the study team attended the inauguration ceremony of a new *Ugaz* (religious leader) in Guradamole District, which brought together families from seven sub-clans as well as NGOs and dignitaries including the local Member of Parliament. Community leaders took the opportunity of this unusual gathering to hold a public fund-raising drive towards the construction of a primary school building for the community. The argument was that once the building was in place – entirely paid for by the community itself – the regional

155 A woman in rural Gashamo.

government would be shamed into sending teachers. The public pledges that were made in the next hour amounted to several camels, cows, sheep and goats, plus more than a thousand Birr and over a hundred dollars.

In another case, a primary school in rural Gashamo has been established and is running entirely through donor and NGO support. The Japanese government paid for the building costs, the British government has sponsored the furniture, and Hope for the Horn is subsidising the school's running costs. The headmaster of the school has ambitions of opening a secondary school in the same community, by calling on remittances from the Somali diaspora: 'We receive no money from the Ethiopian government. We have launched an appeal to Somalis abroad for funds for the secondary school we hope to open here in September 2005.'[156]

17.3 Costs of education

Costs of education are relatively low in Somali Region, but are higher for formal schooling than Koranic schools. Government schools are not supposed to charge fees, but parents in Jigjiga town noted that they have to pay several indirect costs to send a child to school – registration fee, uniform, books – while the Koranic school charges only a nominal tuition fee. The estimated cost of sending a child to primary school in Jigjiga is 125–175 Birr per term, while Koranic school costs just 15 Birr. Even where no fees are required, many parents can not afford to send their children to school, because the non-fee costs are too high. In one Kebribayah household with three children under 12 years old, none of the children was attending the local formal school, because of 'lack of money to buy the uniforms and educational materials our children need'.

In rural communities where cash incomes are lower than in town, even modest expenses can be prohibitive, and can result in children being deprived of a formal education. 'I would like to send all my children to school, but can't afford to.'[157] 'It is only lack of money that prevents me from sending my children to school.' In some places local NGOs have established non-government schools which do charge fees, though these are often subsidised by the NGO. 'School fees are 195 Birr, of which the student actually pays 135 Birr and Hope for the Horn pays the balance. The parents also have to pay for their school uniforms.'[158]

One parent in rural Gashamo argued that pastoralists need free boarding schools to be provided, since the costs of boarding can exclude children from pastoralist families getting an education. (As discussed below, there are also reasons, not related to cost, why boarding tends to exclude girls more than boys.)

> We need schooling to be free. We need to be able to educate our children, but at the moment the fees and different costs make it impossible for us to do so. We need boarding schools which are free so that children not living in Gashamo can also attend.[159]

Koranic teachers charge variable fees, and often parents make voluntary contributions rather than paying fixed fees. Contributions can be made in cash or in kind, and are often differentiated according to ability to pay – wealthier families offer larger contributions. Koranic teachers are also more flexible than formal schools, and are typically sympathetic to conditions of hardship that might afflict their clients. In the year before the drought of 2004, for instance, it cost families in one Gashamo community 20,000 Somali Shillings to send a child to the local Koranic school. During the drought they were excused having to pay fees, because of the general hardship caused by the drought. ('At this time people don't

156 Primary school principal, rural Gashamo.

157 Male pastoralist in rural Gashamo.

158 Primary school principal, rural Gashamo.

159 A woman in rural Gashamo.

Box 17.2 **Case study: Koranic teacher, Shilabo District**

Mohamed is a 40-year-old man who runs the only Koranic school in Lasoole village, Shilabo District. He has two wives but no children. Mohamed started teaching the Koran 20 years ago. His father was a pastoralist and after he died Mohamed inherited seven camels and ten shoats. However, all these animals perished during the drought of 1992, and Mohamed decided to look for something else to do outside pastoralism. After considering various options, he chose teaching because, unlike pastoralism, it has no risks. He also claimed that he did not want to go around the community looking for assistance, as he preferred to look after himself.

Mohamed currently teaches 110 students, of whom 70 are boys and 40 are girls. He charges 4 Birr per student per week and 30 Birr per student after completion. Most students take three years to master the Koran. Mohamed recognises that it is difficult for students to gain meaningful employment only with Koranic education and he hopes that formal, secular education will also be provided, so that children can have a better chance in life. As things stand now, the only opportunity open to most local children is to look after their parents' livestock after completing the course at his school.

Source: Qualitative survey interview, Shilabo District.

pay anything.') In another Gashamo community a family that contributed one goat to the Koranic school per child each year as a payment in kind withdrew their children in 2004, after the drought decimated their livestock.

17.4 Attitudes to education

The "education deficit" in Somali Region has a demand-side as well as a supply-side explanation. Limited access to formal education is matched by ambivalent attitudes to educating children. Part of this ambivalence reflects scepticism about the value of education, but part of it is socio-cultural. Attitudes to education in Somali Region are highly gendered, in at least three ways. First, as a generalisation, women see the benefits of education more clearly and more positively than do men. ('Somali women want their children to be educated!') Second, while mothers offer persuasive arguments for educating their daughters, fathers tend to believe that there is more value in educating sons. Third, almost all parents are reluctant to send their daughters to boarding schools, because of concerns for their physical safety.

Some Somali men appear to be indifferent to the idea of sending their children to school. 'I don't believe in educating my children. Education isn't going to help them.'[160] One woman who is sending all five of her children to school told us that she is personally paying for all the costs: 'When I asked my husband to help with school fees, he said: "Why should they go to school? Why bother sending the girls to school when they will get married into another family? We are pastoralists; we didn't go to school, why should our children?"'[161]

Somali women recognise the need to change attitudes, not only to encourage the government to provide more schools, but also to promote a more positive attitude to educating children among their husbands, brothers and fathers. 'It's not only the Ethiopian government that is the problem; it's also our own men who don't see the need for education.'[162] Women argue that Somali men don't see the value of education because they see the future as being like the past – looking after animals – for which literacy is unnecessary. 'Men are stubborn and can't move with the changing times.'[163] A high school

160 A pastoralist man, displaced by drought to Gashamo town.

161 A woman in Gashamo town.

162 A woman in Gashamo town.

163 Female store-owner, Gashamo town.

pupil in Gashamo town said: 'Some of our parents don't see the benefits of education, because they have seen people with education still being unemployed.'

Conversely, many Somali women see the future for their children as lying outside of pastoralism, and for this, they regard education as essential. 'In the future, it is only education that will keep people out of poverty.'[164] In a focus group discussion in Shinile District, women mentioned several reasons as to why education is increasingly important in the contemporary world.

> Education empowers people and gives them more options in life.
>
> Unlike the drought which can finish all our livestock, nothing can take away what has been learnt.
>
> These days, you need to be able to read and count. The world has changed – it's no place for an illiterate person.
>
> Children should go to school to learn the English language, which is important to know these days.
>
> We need a school so we can send some of our children to school and they can take care of us in our old age if they are educated and have jobs.
>
> Life is easier for educated people.

Elsewhere, pastoralist women made the argument that education is important for helping people to be 'better pastoralists'. 'Education is very good for any human being, including pastoralists. Education can even help them to be better pastoralists – to understand better about weather and animals.'[165] However, the impacts of recent droughts on rural livelihoods appears to be causing a rethink. The immediate impacts of the 2004 drought on education were negative – teachers and children both failed to attend school, at least temporarily. 'Since the drought, teachers cannot teach due to hunger, and students cannot attend school, also because of hunger.'[166] On the other hand, the obvious and arguably increasing risks associated with pastoralism have shifted parental attitudes in favour of education, as they recognise that educated people have more diverse livelihood options. Education is perceived as a means of improving access to sources of income outside of pastoralism that are unlikely to be affected by drought.

> Previously, if someone asked me to send my child to school, I would think that person is insane. Now, my attitude has completely changed, because education can sustain better than pastoralism.[167]
>
> These days, it is better if the women have some way of earning an income to assist the family in times of drought. But it's even better if they have an education and a job that doesn't depend at all on the drought. That's the only way that people are going to survive in the future.[168]

Children themselves expressed a preference for going to school, rather than herding livestock.

> I don't go to school, but I would like to. I would like to be a teacher. I don't want to be a pastoralist because the animals always die easily when there's a drought. It's a very hard life, and I don't like it. I prefer to live in town, not in a village. My friends are

164 Female store-owner, Gashamo town.

165 A woman in rural Gashamo.

166 Focus group participant, Shinile District.

167 Female focus group participant, Maromadobes IDP camp, Shinile District.

168 Female store-owner, Gashamo town.

> the same like me. None of us like tending the cattle and walking in the sun all the time. Children who go to school are always clean and tidy, not dirty and ragged like us who look after cattle. I want to be able to read and write so that I can read newspapers and travel to far places.[169]

When asked about their parents' attitudes to education, female high school pupils participating in a focus group discussion mentioned several reasons why Somali parents might be reluctant to educate their children, especially their daughters.[170]

> Most parents believe that it's not important and necessary to send girls to school because they will leave the family when they marry.
>
> If my father was still alive, as his daughter I wouldn't have been sent to school. He was a traditionalist, and many Somali men are traditionalists. If our mothers made the decisions and had the means, I believe all of them would send us to school.

In contrast to the conservative attitudes of many fathers, most mothers seem determined to educate their daughters, recognising that education will provide the next generation of women with opportunities and independence that they themselves did not enjoy. Several participants in a women's focus group in Gashamo town confirmed that they had made the decision to send their daughters or grand-daughters to school, often without either financial or moral support from their husbands.

> Although I would like all my grandchildren to be educated, I can only afford to send the eldest girl to school. So, *Inshallah*, one day if she is a divorcee like me or a widow, she'll be able to manage without a husband, not like me!
>
> These days, people need education more than they need animals. I would prefer my daughter to marry an educated man and live in a house in a city instead of marrying a man with 100 camels, but be living and moving in the bush.
>
> It is better to educate a girl than a boy because daughters will help you forever because they are more sympathetic than boys. When girls get married, they do leave home and go to their husbands' home, but they continue to support their mothers whenever they can. When a boy gets married, he forgets that he has a mother and only concentrates on his wife and his own children. So, because I don't have enough money to send all my children to school, I decided to send my two daughters to school while my sons stay at home.

One constraint to female education is the necessity for most Somali schoolchildren to become boarders, especially at secondary school level, because of the limited number of schools and the mobile lifestyle of pastoralists. Many parents – both mothers and fathers – expressed concerns about the vulnerability of their daughters to sexual predation by male pupils and teachers in a co-educational school system, and especially in boarding schools, which parents do not regard as secure environments for teenage girls. One secondary school in Gashamo town has 120 students, only 11 (9.2 per cent) of whom are girls. According to the principal, girls usually attend primary school up to fourth grade, at which point their parents often withdraw them. 'Because it's mainly a boarding school, they fear for their daughters' safety, although we try to reassure them.'[171] Some parents suggested that single-sex schools should be provided for girls.

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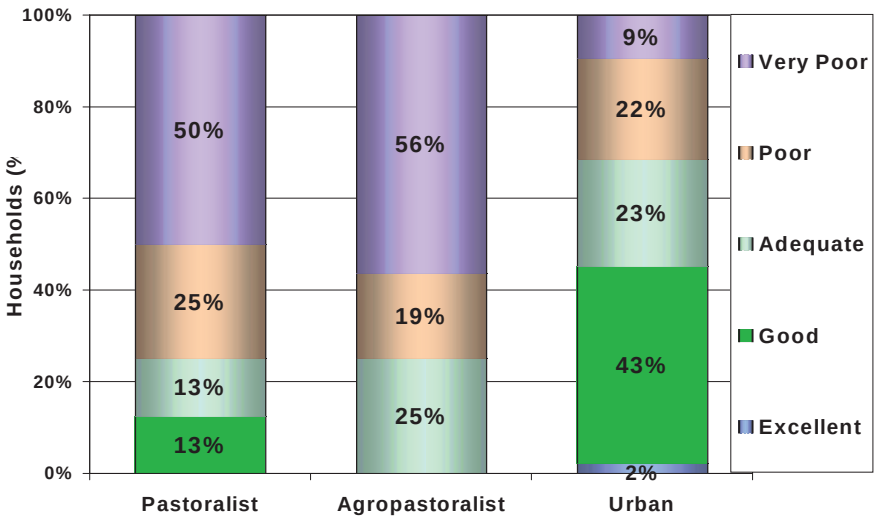
169 A 10-year-old boy in rural Gashamo.

170 Female high school pupils, rural Gashamo.

171 Key informant interview, school principal, Shilabo District.

Figure 17.1 **Perceived quality of education services, Somali Region**



Source: Household survey data (n=294).

> You must please report that we Somali women are not against education! We just fear for our daughters' safety when they are adolescents. That's why we often send our daughters only to the lower classes, and withdraw them when they reach adolescence.[172]
>
> Many parents are scared for the security of their daughters, especially if they are in a boarding school away from home. If girls didn't have to board, more parents would send their daughters to school.
>
> We would like schools for girls only. If the school is for girls, then we won't even be bothered if it's a boarding school. We will send them gladly, knowing they are safe.[173]

17.5 Quality of education services

Another factor that influences the uptake of public services is the perceived quality of those services. Where schools are not regarded as providing a good and relevant basic education, parents will not pay money and lose the contribution that children in Somali Region make to domestic work (household chores, herding animals), by sending their children to school.

According to our respondents, the quality of formal education services varies greatly between rural and urban communities. In Jigjiga town, almost half of our interviewees (45 per cent) described education services as 'good' or 'excellent', but in pastoralist Gashamo District only 13 per cent held this positive view, and none at all in agro-pastoralist Kebribayah (Figure 17.1).[174] On the other hand, 75 per cent of respondents in Gashamo and Kebribayah perceive the education services that are accessible to their children as 'poor' or 'very poor', whereas only 31 per cent of respondents in Jigjiga town chose these pejorative descriptions.

Because of this negative perception of education quality in rural areas, parents might choose not to educate their children, even in those rural communities where schools are accessible. The lesson for policy-makers is that bridging the education deficit in Somali Region has two aspects – providing more schools, and improving the quality of education services.

172 A woman in rural Gashamo.

173 A woman in rural Gashamo.

174 Since this question was only asked in three districts during the first leg of fieldwork, these findings should be regarded as indicative rather than representative of Somali Region.

Section 5 Conclusions and implications for policy

In the two concluding chapters of this report, we start by presenting findings from our research on how Ethiopian Somalis themselves see the future, specifically concerning their livelihood options – to continue to pursue pastoralism as in the past, or to abandon pastoralism and sedentarise or urbanise. The final chapter explores options for policy-makers, not in narrow prescriptive terms, but in terms of broad directions which "developmental" policies for Somali Region could follow.

18 Somali attitudes to the future of pastoralism

The severity and frequency of recent droughts have exposed deep divisions about the future of pastoralism in Somali Region, along both gender and generational lines. In general, Somali men remain strongly committed to a future in pastoralism, even if they have lost all their animals, while women and children are increasingly attracted to alternative lifestyles that are urban-based and more settled. Men can see no alternative to keeping animals – it is all they know how to do and it is intrinsic to "Somali culture". ('We are people of animals.') Women, on the other hand, see pastoralism as a hard life that generates little reward for them: pastoralism is not 'Somali culture'; it is 'men's culture'. Children speak of 'living in the twenty-first century', with telephones and computers, 'not like our ancestors'. These fundamentally opposing views about future trajectories for rural people in Somali Region are the source of some tensions. Men accuse women who do not share their commitment to the pastoral way of life as 'betraying the culture'. A focus group discussion with men in Gashamo town was very revealing of men's attitudes in this respect (Box 18.1).

When invited to comment on the fact that women are increasingly expressing a preference for a sedentary life in town over a mobile life in the bush, men were dismissive of these sentiments and often made insulting remarks about such women: 'Women want to settle because they are not as strong as men'; 'Women these days want a comfortable life with luxuries. They have become softer than women in the olden days'; 'Young women are lazier than the women in the past.'[175]

Many women, on the other hand, are deeply sceptical about the future of pastoralism in Somali Region. Dozens of Somali women who were interviewed or participated in group discussions during our fieldwork expressed dissatisfaction with the pastoralist way of life, and a preference for settling down in town. 'We are tired of living like our animals. It is no way for human beings to live.' Several factors account for this. One point that must be re-emphasised, however, is that many of our focus group discussions with women were held in Gashamo, soon after the severe drought of 2004 had left many rural families destitute and displaced them to town. In this unusual and highly stressful context, it is hardly surprising that these women were disillusioned with a livelihood system that appears to be failing. Women elsewhere in Somali Region, especially in communities unaffected by recent droughts, did not express such strongly negative opinions.

Women in Gashamo are concerned that pastoralism is increasingly unviable, and they have seen the possibility of a better life – easier, settled, less risky, healthier – for themselves and their children in urban areas. In a group discussion on this subject, women revealed themselves as thinking creatively about options for the future (Box 18.2). They also asserted

175 Male focus group participants, Gashamo.

Box 18.1 **"People of animals"? Somali men's attitudes to the future of pastoralism**

Man no. 1: 'All of us here are pastoralists, although you are finding us all here in town and not out in the bush with our animals. But that is just because of our problems with our animals. I have lost more than 100 animals over the last years and droughts. I only have a few animals left, and my eldest sons are taking care of them in the bush.'

Man no. 2: 'I also lost many animals – in the last drought and now. Soon, I won't have anything to give to my sons.'

Man no. 3: 'My sons aren't interested in keeping animals. I have to force them to go and look after them. They are more interested in schooling, but I can't afford to send them.'

Man no. 4: 'These days, most of the boys aren't interested in being pastoralists. When I was a boy, all I wanted was to own my own animals like my father and uncles. My sons are not like that. I know they want to live in town and aren't interested in anything to do with livestock. It's just because they have no alternatives and I force them to do it. Otherwise, they would simply leave and go to a big town like Hargeisa.'

Man no. 5: 'The droughts are making it difficult, but I don't think we should leave it all behind. My son wants to carry on this way of life even though it's difficult. It's all that he knows.

Man no. 6: 'We are people of animals. As Somalis, we can't live in towns and cities. We live for our animals. We wouldn't agree to it.'

Man no. 7: 'A Somali man will do everything to protect his animals and his livelihood. We don't want to live in towns. It is in our blood to move with our animals when we need to.'

Man no. 8: 'Women may want to settle because they want to trade in towns. Pastoralism is a difficult life, but it is our culture. Maybe men are more faithful to the culture than women.'

Source: Men's focus group, Gashamo town.

that men are more resistant to change, and less adaptable. Several women challenged the view that Somali culture is necessarily and inextricably linked to rearing livestock. ('There are Somalis all over the world and they're not pastoralists.') Some women even suggested that pastoralism should be seen as part of 'men's culture' rather than 'Somali culture'. More generally, these women rejected the suggestion expressed by many men that Somali culture is invariant over time, and that there are no alternatives to a pastoral way of life. 'In other places, like Hargeisa, I have seen Somali women driving cars. That is a sign of freedom. It also shows us that Somali women in different places behave differently and that the Somali culture is different in different places.'[176]

Although most women in Gashamo expressed a preference for a settled way of life, which was perceived as more comfortable, less risky and less hard work, three distinct positions could be identified: (1) complete sedentarisation; (2) "spreading risks" by dividing the family between urban and rural livelihoods; (3) remaining in pastoralism. Very few women chose the third option. Conversely, strongly positive views were expressed in favour of sedentarisation, especially moving to towns which were seen as holding many attractions and no disadvantages: 'People never starve in towns, only in places like this where we are forgotten.' Retaining a rural way of life but educating some children was advocated as a compromise between these two extremes.

One powerful argument for *sedentarisation* is that people who are settled and live in towns have a better standard of living and a more comfortable life. According to one woman who

176 A woman in rural Gashamo.

Box 18.2 **"No good future in pastoralism"? Somali women's attitudes to the future of pastoralism**

Woman no. 1: 'Because of the many droughts these days, it's not easy to be a pastoralist. Now, the droughts are more severe than in the past.'

Woman no. 2: 'But the men don't understand this in the same way: they are too stubborn. They want to carry on despite the difficulties. But because it is us women who are suffering and not able to send our children to school, we are the ones who see there is no good future in pastoralism.'

Woman no. 3: 'If droughts continue like this, you won't find pastoralists in the future, although, of course, we wish we could continue to be pastoralists. But the circumstances are changing and making it difficult to continue.'

Woman no. 4: 'We have all grown up as pastoralists, so we know that life. There are things that we like about it – when things are going well and you can sell your animals – but there are also many difficulties with that life – even when there are no droughts. I remember when I was a small girl, I used to walk far with my family and our animals – for many weeks at a time. Sometimes, we never had enough food and water; sometimes we had to drink filthy water. We were always tired; it was very dusty. There wasn't any chance of attending school or clinics. It was a hard life, even where weren't droughts. So, if I had to choose that for my sons or education, then I wouldn't choose pastoralism.'

Woman no. 5: 'As Somalis, it's our culture, like Islam, to be pastoralists. Without it, we are losing a part of our culture. So, it would be better to educate some of our children, and send others with the animals. In that way, we can continue with our traditions, but can also change to meet the changing times with those of our children that are educated.'

Woman no. 6: 'I don't think we should leave pastoralism completely, but we need to realise that it will decrease in the future because of the land and droughts. So, we need to also have alternatives like work and education.'

Woman no. 7: 'The children these days don't have an interest in livestock. That's the other problem: we can't force them to be pastoralists. In the past, all boys wanted to have many animals; now, they want jobs and don't want to live out in the bush anymore. Maybe they want animals, but they don't want to care for them themselves: they think of employing someone to look after the animals while they live in town while having a good job.'

Woman no. 8: 'For girls, there isn't a life in pastoralism. We don't own the animals, but work very hard. And then, if you divorce like me, you are left with nothing. You did all the work for your husband and the livestock, but you're left with nothing. He won't give you a single animal to take care of his own children. So, I think it's better for girls to be educated and get jobs and forget about pastoralism.'

Woman no. 9: 'When we talk of pastoralism being part of Somali culture, it's actually part of men's culture. We get nothing out of it. So, I agree that the men will try and carry on with it, but the women are losing interest.'

Source: Women's focus group, Gashamo District.

visited her sister in Hargeisa: 'We had a bathroom, toilet and water in the house. We had electricity. It was such a nice and easy life. I would like to live in one place like that.'

A second powerful motivation for settling down is to access basic services, especially health and education, that are largely inaccessible in rural Somali Region. Many women recognise the difficulties that government faces in providing services in isolated mobile communities, and suggested that they need to choose between living without services in the bush, or settling down in order to access these services.

> In the past, we didn't know about these services and we didn't need them or want them. That's why we were not bothered to settle down. Now because we know about these things, some of us want them. So, we have to make the decision to either continue with pastoralism or settle in one place.
>
> We Somalis live all over the place. Some of us live in the bush, others are walking looking for grazing. It's not possible for the government to provide us with these services all over the Region. We are too scattered. If people want access to these services, then they will have to settle in one place.

Other women who are committed to continuing in pastoralism were less willing to accept that they should abandon their way of life simply to access essential services, and felt that the government has a responsibility to make schools and clinics more accessible in rural areas. 'For myself, I prefer pastoralism to going to towns. We want to continue being pastoralists but we also want decent facilities like health centres and schools. We don't want to leave pastoralism just to gain access to these services.'

The case for livelihood *diversification* was made mainly on risk-spreading grounds: that the high and possibly rising riskiness of livestock-based livelihoods is making it increasingly necessary 'to divide our families between those who continue with our livestock and those who will be sent to school and will settle in one place and find work'. The advantages of having family members earning income outside pastoralism were expressed by several respondents:

> It's better to divide our children between different activities – between pastoralism and education and jobs.
>
> We are still pastoralists. So, I think we should send some of our children to school and some to look after the animals. In that way, our culture can survive while, at the same time, some are being educated and getting work and sending money to help us. In that way, we are spreading our risks.
>
> I have six children and decided to send three for livestock-rearing and three for education.
>
> I would like to send one son to school in Gashamo. With Allah's help, he will find a job one day and help us. The rest of us will take care of our livestock. If the droughts continue, then he will be able to rescue the rest of us.

Asked to "vote" on whether they preferred to continue with their mobile pastoralist way of life or settle down and live in town, all 11 women in one focus group and all except one very old woman in a community discussion with 18 women (both in Gashamo) voted for being settled. The old woman said: 'I want to die and be buried here.' A more typical response was this one: 'We wouldn't mind saying goodbye to the animals and the droughts and hardships.'[177]

In one settlement in Gashamo, a community meeting generated an interesting debate between men and women, which highlighted some fundamental points of disagreement (Box 18.3).

Ultimately, the future of pastoralism depends not just on the attitudes of people who are currently practising pastoralism as their livelihood system, but even more crucially on the attitudes and aspirations of future generations. Many women pointed out that their children and grandchildren are on the verge of rejecting pastoralism as a way of life, because of a combination of "push" factors (the increasing difficulties of pursuing a livestock-based livelihood in Somali Region) and "pull" factors (the lure of urban living): 'It is difficult to find children these days that are interested in pastoralism, even boys. My own grandsons aren't

177 Women's focus group participants, rural Gashamo.

Box 18.3 **"Better to have an education than a hundred camels"? A gendered debate on the future of pastoralism in Somali Region**

Woman no. 1: 'You can lose your animals, as a pastoralist, but you can never lose your education. If we were educated, do you think we would be sitting here and suffering like this? You'll never see an educated person suffering like this. It's better to have an education than a hundred camels.

Man no. 1: 'Men will never agree with that. For us, there is nothing better or more valuable than having many camels and livestock. Without our animals, we are not Somalis. Our animals are an important part of our culture and our way of life. Even those of us who are farming still have animals because we can't give up our animals.'

Woman no. 2: 'But what about the droughts? If you had education plus animals, if you lost your animals, you could still use your education to find a job or be a big trader. Do you want your sons to struggle like you? Do you want them only to know animals?'

Man no. 2: 'No, I wouldn't bother to send my children to school even if there was one in the village. Instead, I would teach them everything about our animals and how to avoid the bad effects of droughts.'

Woman no. 3: 'I think all the women of this village will agree with us and send their children to school. Most of the men will agree with him because they are all the same and only believe in their animals.'

Man no. 1: 'We can't do anything about droughts because they are sent by Allah. There are more droughts now than when my father was a young boy. There is a problem of too many people and too many animals on too little land. But it doesn't mean that we have to give it up.'

Woman no. 4: 'Women are more practical and realistic than men. Men realise that their circumstances have changed, but they say we are still going to continue. We women say, these changes mean that we also have to change our livelihoods. We look at other new alternatives.'

Woman no. 5: 'Our first need is for a school. If our children can get educated, we will be able to give them alternatives to pastoralism. Even if we die so poor, at least our children will have a chance of a better future.'

Man no. 3: 'Before a school, we need help with restocking. Once we have animals again, we will be able to resume our livelihoods. Then we will be able to take care of our families and children.'

Source: Mixed-sex focus group discussion, Gashamo District.

interested in helping with animals any more: they want to live in towns and have nothing to do with animals'; 'Our children don't want to live like we do. They want more from life than we have'; 'Some young girls have seen television, and say they want to have that kind of life that they see there.'

Children who participated in discussions at local schools confirmed these sentiments.

> We are living in the twenty-first century. We can't be expected to live like the nineteenth century, like our ancestors. We should move in time with the changing times. We can't behave as if things like computers and phones don't exist. Since we know about these things, we also want to have them. In the old days these things didn't exist, so our parents just continued living as their ancestors. For our generation, things are different and we want different things. None of the children in this school want to be pastoralists. We have been sent to school in order to get a better life.[178]

178 Female high school pupil, rural Gashamo.

19 Implications for policy

The major challenges facing Somali Region are political rather than technocratic, and many policy prescriptions (such as investing in education and health services) are obvious and "common sense". But identifying what to do is only part of the challenge; how to implement these interventions to deliver effective social protection and development programmes is another matter altogether. This final chapter does not provide a checklist of policy recommendations that the government of Ethiopia and its donor partners should adopt in order to reduce livelihood vulnerability in Somali Region. Instead, given the complexity and insecurity of this highly politicised policy context, this concluding chapter asks four topical policy-related questions and suggests broad directions for strategic thinking around policy design and implementation:

1 Is pastoralism unviable in Somali Region?

2 How to plan for unpredictability?

3 Is sedentarisation the solution?

4 What kinds of safety nets are needed?

19.1 Is pastoralism unviable in Somali Region?

Livelihoods in Somali Region have suffered a series of shocks in recent years, some natural and some policy-related, which in combination have been so severe that resilience and ability to cope have been dangerously compromised. Probably the most devastating livelihood shock that Somali pastoralists and farmers face is drought, and the sequence of low rainfall years that started in 1999/2000 have been so frequent – with insufficient time in between for herds and flocks to reconstitute – that some observers interpret this as a long-term decline in rainfall (indicative of global climate change) and are predicting the end of pastoralism in the Greater Horn of Africa.

Drought is not the only risk that people face in dryland areas. This report has demonstrated that the people of Somali Region experience multiple sources of vulnerability. The implication is that a multi-pronged approach to managing risk and reducing vulnerability is required. A common failing of past rangeland development projects in Africa was to focus on single issues and interventions in isolation, such as addressing animal health problems with veterinary services, or addressing the under-provision of education and health services with mobile schools and clinics. These measures are important, and both would contribute greatly to improving the well-being of people in Somali Region, but they are not enough. There are political, institutional and social issues that also need to be addressed by the people of the region themselves.

Two interpretations can be drawn from the evidence presented in this report. The first is that pastoralism in rural Somali Region is becoming increasingly unviable, and that more intervention is therefore needed, to support (or control) pastoralists. This might include building abattoirs and requiring livestock exports to be processed according to international phyto-sanitary standards, or it might involve settling the pastoralists ("facilitating sedentarisation", as the government terms it) to better provide services such as schools and clinics. This argument is reinforced by indicators suggesting that rural people in Somali Region have extremely poor outcome indicators (in terms of mortality, for instance), and that provision of basic public services (health and education) was seriously inadequate at the time of our survey – in sedentary as well as mobile communities.

An alternative interpretation is that pastoralist livelihoods are as resilient as they have ever been, but that pastoralists are operating under an increasingly difficult policy environment, which makes it impossible for their usual adaptive strategies to be implemented. Droughts might be the trigger for recent crises, but increasing vulnerability to drought is the underlying problem. While conflict, border closures and import bans all fuel the view that

pastoralism is unviable, the solution might be to lift these constraints and allow the "traditional" marketing system to continue (it is, after all, relatively efficient and competitive). According to this argument, giving people options is the way forward, not restricting options by settling pastoralists and closing down opportunities for trade.

The instincts of the Ethiopian government are to intervene and regulate, while the instincts of pastoralists are flexible and contingent – adapting to unpredictable circumstances is the key to pastoralist survival (Scoones 1995). The conflict that this fundamental difference in worldview provokes is inevitable, and is sometimes mistakenly represented within Ethiopia as a clash of ethnicities and religions. Accommodating both worldviews within a unitary modern nation-state is an ongoing political challenge. The government is proposing or introducing a series of solutions to what it perceives as the "crisis of pastoralism". Paradoxically, these "solutions" – sedentarisation of pastoralists, centralisation of livestock and meat marketing, and regularisation of informal cross-border trade (the "war on contraband") – directly contradict the pastoralist's need for flexibility. While many genuinely believe that these policies are the only logical way forward for Somali Region, pastoralists and traders interpret these interventions as restricting their opportunities and closing down options. Whether livestock-based livelihoods remain viable in future is a question only the people of Somali Region – male and female, young and old – can answer, but they need the freedom and flexibility to give it a fair chance, and to change and adapt in ways that they choose.

19.2 How to plan for unpredictability?

Pastoralism in Somali Region is characterised by instability, unpredictability and variability. It follows that all policy interventions by governments and donors should follow two principles: (1) reduce vulnerabilities, and (2) expand options, to spread risk. Instead of imposing solutions, external actors should play a facilitating role, increasing opportunities for local people to make their own decisions about their future.

Vulnerability is usually defined as a product of two factors: exposure to risk, and ability to cope (Chambers 1989). Rural livelihoods in Somali Region are exposed to an extraordinary number of diverse risks – including drought, conflict, and policy shocks – against which local people have devised a range of risk management and coping strategies. Key to their ability to cope is flexibility and mobility, while ability to cope is undermined by constraints on mobility of all kinds – physical, economic, social.

In the context of pastoralist livelihoods, *physical mobility* relates principally to the freedom for people to move with their animals in search of grazing, water and markets, including across borders. In Somali Region, pastoralists and traders face multiple constraints to physical mobility. These include the Saudi livestock import ban, the Ethiopian government's border closures and its impounding of vehicles transporting livestock and commodities, the inaccessibility of certain pastures and water points to clans because of conflict or *aabsi* (fear of conflict). Most of these constraints are not "natural" or environmental, but are related to policies and politics. Positive policy changes and political interventions could alleviate or remove these constraints.

There are many positive steps that the regional, federal or local government of Ethiopia could take immediately, to facilitate the physical mobility of people and animals in Somali Region. These include:

- Negotiating at government-to-government ministerial level with Saudi Arabia to lift the import ban against Ethiopian livestock.
- Formalising the role of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and arbitrate (where appropriate), to resolve conflicts between (sub-)clans, given that decentralisation provides opportunities for direct engagement of MPs and administrators in local issues.
- Resuming the dialogue with the ONLF to agree a ceasefire in the short term, and negotiate a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the government and the ONLF in the long term.

- Ending the "war on contraband", and instead put in place better policies to support both trade and revenue-raising objectives, for the benefit of pastoralists, traders and public services.

Many would accept that contraband trade and informal cross-border livestock marketing need to be regulated, but this should be managed in a negotiated process that is consultative and transparent. The arbitrary seizure of property and apparent randomness of actions against Somali traders and pastoralists has introduced new sources of uncertainty to local livelihoods, and has raised vulnerability unnecessarily, sometimes to intolerable levels – traders and small enterprises are going out of business, which has no obvious benefits to anyone. It is time to replace these strategies with new and more effective approaches.

Economic mobility refers to the ability to move out of one livelihood activity into another, either temporarily or permanently. Very little economic mobility was observed in this research, and most of the mobility that was recorded was downward. If all the family's livestock die during a drought, for instance, the available livelihood options are limited and almost always inferior, in terms of both income generation and social status. Such options include: resorting to petty activities such as collecting firewood and burning charcoal for sale, or moving into an IDP camp and becoming dependent on food aid. None of these livelihood strategies is preferred – they are forced rather than chosen – and reflect a level of vulnerability that has exceeded the family's ability to cope.

Achieving upward economic mobility requires access to capital, which might be provided by a relative living abroad in the Somali diaspora, and will allow business enterprises to be initiated or expanded. Alternatively, upward economic mobility can be achieved through formal employment, but most jobs require education – at the very least, functional literacy and numeracy – whereas most Ethiopian Somalis are illiterate.

What can the government of Ethiopia do to facilitate upward economic mobility and minimise the risk of downward economic mobility in Somali Region? Positive policy options include:

- Prioritising the delivery of good quality primary education for all children in Somali Region, increasing the emphasis on innovative approaches such as mobile schools, and providing single-sex boarding schools to encourage female enrolment.
- Promoting the development of financial intermediation services – credit and savings – to provide working capital and loans for families that do not have relatives remitting income from abroad.
- Reducing the regulations and "red tape" that inhibit the registration and operation of private enterprises in Somali Region as elsewhere in Ethiopia.

Expanding people's options should be a guiding principle of all interventions aimed at improving livelihoods and reducing vulnerability. Basic education (functional literacy) is a prerequisite for making a living in most economic sectors outside farming and pastoralism – and can also raise the returns to farming and pastoralism – yet Somali Region has the lowest primary enrolment rate of any region in Ethiopia. Cultural resistance to educating children, especially daughters, may be part of the explanation, but without adequate access to schools parents are denied even the possibility of making a choice. Major investments are needed in rural education infrastructure, as well as in the recruitment, training and deployment of teachers.

The imperative of providing decent education cannot be exaggerated, and there is evidence from our fieldwork of strong demand for education, especially among women and children. But of course, education takes time, and this is not a strategy that addresses the needs of families in Somali Region that have already dropped out of pastoralism or are on the verge of doing so. In the short term, many of these families need urgent social assistance (possibly but not necessarily in the form of food aid), and they also need urgent "livelihood

assistance" to support their return to a sustainable livelihood. The appropriate form that livelihood assistance should take depends on a judgement about the future viability of pastoralism. If the present sequence of droughts is regarded as a temporary downturn in a long-term cycle (such that average rainfall will soon return to higher pre-drought levels), then standard approaches to post-drought rehabilitation are appropriate, such as restocking of livestock herds and flocks, or providing seeds and tools for farming. If, however, the recent droughts are taken as indicative of an irreversible decline in rainfall, to levels too low to maintain livestock-based livelihoods, then any efforts to support pastoralism are entirely inappropriate. During our fieldwork we heard stories of families who had been assisted by an international NGO with livestock restocking after the 2000 drought, only to lose these animals in the drought of 2004.

The fact is, nobody knows how much rain will fall in Somali Region this year, or next year, or in five or ten years' time. Given this uncertainty, it is inappropriate to impose policies on people that either keep them trapped in pastoralism or force them to exit pastoralism. Flexibility is the key to pastoralist survival in an unpredictable environment, and policy-makers need to learn from the pastoralists, and to plan for unpredictability – to allow for alternative scenarios that might or might not occur, or that might occur for some people but not others. Ideally, for families for whom pastoralism does become unviable, exit strategies from pastoralism will be available that are "up and out" rather than "down and out". Education to enable the next generation to find jobs in town is an example of an "up and out" strategy. Becoming chronically dependent on food aid handouts in an IDP camp is a "down and out" outcome.

There is at present a concern among policy-makers to break the cycle of dependence on food aid in Ethiopia, and it is very important to avoid the institutionalisation of food aid in Somali Region. Nonetheless, food aid will inevitably be needed for humanitarian reasons – for IDPs, or for people affected by drought or conflict – and for these groups food aid must be well targeted and it should be delivered regularly and predictably. As far as possible, food aid should be used in a way that supports livelihoods rather than undermining them. School feeding or food-for-education could be introduced in support of the delivery of education services. Public works projects (which could pay workers with cash wages rather than food rations) could focus on the construction and maintenance of basic social infrastructure – given the enormous infrastructure deficits in Somali Region – such as school buildings and health centres, or water points that provide safe drinking water. Economic mobility depends on physical and human capital formation, and social protection interventions can be used in ways that support this.

Social mobility is determined mainly by culture, and is therefore less amenable to policy intervention than physical or economic mobility. In the specific socio-cultural context of Somali Region, some groups are more constrained and more vulnerable than others. Women, for instance, have heavier domestic responsibilities and less decision-making power within the home than do men. Outside the home, they tend to be canalised into low-income, low-status economic activities. But this is changing. Some of the biggest and most powerful traders in Somali Region are women. Driven by processes of social change and accelerated by the recent droughts, where loss of livestock has reduced many men to chewing *khat*, women are assuming more economic responsibilities. In cases where their husbands are reluctant to allow them to work outside the home, some women are appealing directly to the elders, and forcing social change in that way.

Certain ethnic groups and clans in Somali Region appear to be socially excluded and politically marginalised. These include the "Bantu Somalis" of Kelafo and Dolo Odo, and the Issa Somalis of Shinile District. In some cases this lack of social status and political power translates into higher levels of poverty and vulnerability, and should therefore be taken into account by policy-makers. For instance, these groups might need special attention in terms of social protection – leaving the allocation of food aid and other social transfers to community-based targeting might reinforce their marginalisation and exclusion. Whether (and how) government policies and donor or NGO interventions should aim explicitly to overturn the social hierarchy in Somali Region, or at least to reduce social inequalities, is

debatable. Gender quotas have already been introduced to raise women's representation in regional political structures; perhaps similar affirmative policies could be applied to other groups identified as socially and politically vulnerable.

19.3 Is sedentarisation the solution?

Pastoralism has been a dominant way of life in the Horn of Africa for thousands of years. It would be a remarkable coincidence if the early years of the twenty-first century happen to be the precise historical moment when pastoralism has finally become unviable, and Ethiopia's pastoralists urgently need to be sedentarised. Yet this is precisely the view of many technical experts and some policy-makers, who believe that there is no future for pastoralism in Somali Region, and that nothing less than a transformation of rural livelihoods is required. In 2001, the government articulated the following Pastoral Development Policy:

> Phased voluntary sedentarisation along the banks of the major rivers as the main direction of transforming pastoral societies into agro-pastoral system, from mobility to sedentary life, from rural to small pastoral towns and urbanisation. (FDRE 2001: 5)

As was seen in the previous chapter, some pastoralists (especially women and children) are becoming disillusioned with pastoralism as a way of life, and many are attracted to a more stable existence with access to services and "modern" amenities. But this potentially increasing support for settling down does not necessarily mean that pastoralists have a vision of themselves or their children becoming crop farmers. Pastoralists generally have negative attitudes towards farming for a living ('Scratching the ground with a hoe is no life for a Somali!'), and some pointed out that farmers in Ethiopia are even worse off than pastoralists.

> We look at the problems of the farmers in the highlands and we ask why the government hasn't solved their problems. Every years tons of food aid goes to those farmers, who are supposed to be growing their own food.
>
> Why are the farmers always telling us to become farmers like them? We never tell them to become pastoralists like us!

For many pastoralists (but not all), abandoning livestock rearing to become a farmer would be seen as "downward mobility" in both the economic and the social sense. Farmers and pastoralists famously have little respect for, or understanding of, each other's way of life. But this is not universal, and attitudes are changing. Many pastoralists are cultivating some food crops as insurance against the need to buy food in the market, and the boundaries between pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and settled farmers are increasingly blurred in the complex network of livelihood systems that are pursued in different parts of Somali Region. To describe all Somali pastoralists as resistant to sedentarisation is not true. Many have already become part-time or permanent farmers, often as a response to losing too many livestock to drought. 'One has no control over livestock as the persistent drought in this region is very unkind to pastoralism. Land is better because it will always be there and can be left behind for future generations.'[179]

Most of the agro-pastoralists in Somali Region were pastoralists until one or two generations ago, when they decided to diversify their livelihoods by adding crop farming to livestock rearing. This ability to adapt as circumstances change is a feature of pastoralists' livelihood strategies, and should be encouraged. On the other hand, the annexation and enclosure of land for farming is depriving pastoralists of high quality grazing land – along riverbanks and in valley bottoms – and reducing access to resources which are particularly

179 Farmer in Gode District.

important at times of drought. Any increase in farming raises competition over access to land and water between herders and farmers, and restricts pastoralists' options further.

As an alternative to encouraging pastoralists to become farmers, the government could facilitate "phased voluntary urbanisation" instead. Many pastoralists who have lost their livestock and dropped out of livestock rearing have moved to district capitals like Gode or Gashamo town, or to the regional capital of Jigjiga. This report has shown that urban residents of Somali Region are not only better off in terms of income than rural residents, they are also much less vulnerable. They are less likely to be exposed to devastating livelihood shocks, they are healthier and their children are more likely to be immunised and educated. Existing policies tend to discourage urbanisation and keep people in rural areas, where they remain chronically vulnerable to drought and other livelihood shocks. On balance, urbanisation – which strengthens linkages with the rural economy and thus complements rather than replaces pastoralism – looks like a more attractive alternative than sedentarisation within rural Somali Region.

19.4 What kinds of safety nets are needed?

Somali culture has developed a range of redistributive mechanisms that serve to build social cohesion in good times and spread risk in bad times. These indigenous giving and sharing mechanisms remain important, but are coming under increasing stress. Recurrent covariate shocks are undermining the *capacity* of community members to support their relatives and friends through crises. Social change may be undermining the *willingness* of people to assist each other as much as in the past. People who belong to marginalised groups, or do not have relatives in the diaspora to send remittances, are excluded from the "circles of responsibility" that provide informal social protection to the poor and vulnerable.

Similarly, formal social assistance mechanisms, dominated in recent years by emergency food aid distributions, do not always reach the most vulnerable and food insecure, for whom they are intended. The distribution of food aid follows a vertical channel, from federal to regional to district administration levels, after which it is disbursed to clan elders at the community level, who are supposed to divide this food among the neediest households in their area. However, at each stage some proportion of food aid is diverted to other purposes – such as paying government workers – or lost to corruption. At the community level, elders distribute some food aid to needy community members but allocate the rest to political agendas. ('When it reaches the elders they take half of it and the rest disappears; we don't know where it goes.') At the household level, women accuse their husbands of selling food aid to buy *khat*. Foreign wheat provided as food aid is disliked by Somalis, so tons of this wheat is sold on local markets, undermining farmers and traders.

The challenge for policy-makers designing and implementing safety-net programmes in Somali Region goes beyond the familiar difficulties of targeting the vulnerable in pastoralist communities. These targeting difficulties include:

1 Pastoralists are more mobile than sedentary farmers – which complicates registration procedures and the delivery of resources and public services.

2 Ownership of assets (especially livestock) is partly clan-based and fluid, rather than individualised as in farming households – which complicates the assessment of individual wealth.

3 Because pastoralist livelihoods are characterised by cycles of accumulation, collapse and rebuilding, their wealth and vulnerability are highly variable – which makes identification of "the poor" problematic at any point in time.

4 The range of informal transfers that operate in pastoralist societies (remittances, *zakaat*, etc.) reduces the vulnerability of households that benefit from these social support systems, but are difficult for outsiders to quantify.

A bigger challenge than targeting accuracy is ensuring that substantial proportions of resources allocated to safety nets in Somali Region are not diverted to clan politics, as allegedly happens with much of the federal budget allocation to the Somali regional government. Another challenge is to design programmes that reflect beneficiary priorities (rather than reflecting the availability of *qamadi*, which most Somalis do not want), and support local livelihoods rather than undermining them. When asked if they agree that food aid is an appropriate response to drought, farmers in Kelafo argued that support for farming is a more sensible safety net than food handouts: 'If we had irrigation facilities, we would be providing food to others, not collecting food aid!' Stabilising food production in anticipation of drought shocks is a more creative risk reduction strategy than importing food aid after a shock has occurred.

It is also important to recognise that many other shocks threaten livelihoods in Somali Region, and to devise appropriate social protection strategies to address these various threats. While the famine of 1999/2000 was triggered by a severe drought (and compounded by the late delivery of food aid), the impacts were intensified by underlying vulnerability factors, including conflicts within Somali Region, and the ban on livestock imports imposed by the Gulf States since 1998. This combination of trigger factors and underlying vulnerability factors implies that a famine prevention strategy for Somali Region should include at least three components:

1 ***Drought risk management:*** pre-emptive measures (such as weather insurance) should be explored; as well as guidelines for "off the shelf" actions that can be initiated (such as de-stocking programmes) when early warning indicators suggest an imminent emergency.

2 ***Conflict resolution mechanisms:*** the regional government, local MPs or government officials should work more effectively with clan elders and traditional institutions to negotiate a ceasefire with the ONLF and end unresolved disputes between clans over contested land.

3 ***Livestock marketing support:*** the Ethiopian government should negotiate with Saudi Arabia to lift the import ban against Somali livestock, and should promote trade that supports local livelihoods while generating government revenue for improved services in Somali Region.

If this agenda for addressing vulnerability was implemented, food aid would be mobilised only as a last resort. Instead, droughts and conflicts have persisted, and the Government of Ethiopia has not yet found a way to facilitate legal cross-border trade. Instead of effective drought risk management, conflict resolution, and support for livestock marketing, Somali Region has received a million tons of food aid since the famine of 2000. This is doing little or nothing to reduce the vulnerability of rural livelihoods in Somali Region, and may instead be making things worse.

Annex: Household questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

1) *Greet the person you are interviewing, and introduce yourself.*

2) *Mention which elders and administrators you have met before coming to this household.*

3) *Explain where you are coming from:* You are coming from the Pastoralist Communication Initiative (PCI), which is not an organisation that is implementing projects or delivering assistance like food aid. Instead, PCI is trying to listen to the voices of the people of Somali Region, and to communicate what people are saying to the Gurti, the regional government, and agencies that are making decisions concerning the development of the Somali Region.

4) *Explain the purpose of the study:* This research project aims to capture the stories and experiences of the people of Somali Region, concerning their livelihoods and some of the difficulties people are facing to make a living. Although some problems are obvious, like the droughts and conflicts affecting the Region, every household is unique. So we need to talk to very many households, to understand what is happening at the grassroots level.

5) *Ask if the person you are speaking to has any questions for you before continuing.*

6) *Ask if the respondent is willing to be interviewed. If they agree, start the interview. If the respondent is not willing, do not ask any of the questions and move to the next household.*

HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFICATION			INTERVIEW IDENTIFICATION	
ID	Name	Code	Name of Interviewer:	
Zone			Interviewer Code:	
Woreda			Date of Interview:	Day:_____ Month:_____
Kebele			Start Time:	
Village			End Time:	
Clan			Checked:	
Sub-Clan			Name of Data Entry Clerk:	
Rer				

A.1. HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

(1) Is this a polygamous household? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(2) Is this a female-headed household? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(3) When was your household formed? *(write year)*

ID Code	How related to head of household? *(write code)*	Male [M] or Female [F] *(circle one)*		Age *(age in complete years)*	Can he/ she read & write? *(circle one)*		Years of school completed *(write number or 00 if none)*	Labour capacity *(write code)*	Has s/he been present in the household in the last week? *(circle one)*		If absent: Where is he/ she? *(write code)*	If absent: What is he/ she doing? *(write code)*
(4)	*(5)*	*(6)*		*(7)*	*(8)*		*(9)*	*(10)*	*(11)*		*(12)*	*(13)*
		M	F		Yes	No			Yes	No		
01		1	2		1	2			1	2		
02		1	2		1	2			1	2		
03		1	2		1	2			1	2		
04		1	2		1	2			1	2		
05		1	2		1	2			1	2		
06		1	2		1	2			1	2		
07		1	2		1	2			1	2		
08		1	2		1	2			1	2		
09		1	2		1	2			1	2		
10		1	2		1	2			1	2		
11		1	2		1	2			1	2		
12		1	2		1	2			1	2		
13		1	2		1	2			1	2		
14		1	2		1	2			1	2		
15		1	2		1	2			1	2		
16		1	2		1	2			1	2		
17		1	2		1	2			1	2		

Codes: How related to head of household?

01 = household head
02 = wife
03 = son / daughter of head or wife
04 = son-in-law / daughter-in-law
05 = grandson / granddaughter
06 = father / mother of head or wife
07 = brother / sister of head / wife
08 = other relative of head/ wife
09 = adopted
10 = non-relative / servant

Codes: Labour capacity

1 = young child (too young to work)
2 = working child (herding livestock; doing domestic chores; childcare; may be hired / fostered out)
3 = adult (able to do full adult workload)
4 = elderly (not able to do full adult workload)
5 = permanently disabled (unable to work)
6 = chronically ill (unable to work for past 3 months or more)

Codes: If absent, where?

1 = elsewhere in rural Somali Region
2 = elsewhere in rural Ethiopia
3 = Jijiga town
4 = other urban centres in Ethiopia
5 = neighbouring Somali countries
6 = the Middle East
7 = the West (e.g. UK, US)
8 = other_____

Codes: If absent, what is he/she doing?

1 = visiting
2 = family reasons (funeral, caring for sick family, etc.)
3 = married into other household
4 = looking for work
5 = working elsewhere
6 = feeding/ IDP camp
7 = away for business
8 = away for schooling
9 = other_____

A.2. DEATHS IN THE HOUSEHOLD

(14) Since the fall of Mengistu's government in 1991, has your household suffered any deaths? * *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

* *(If the household was formed more recently, ask "since your household was formed")*

If NO, go to section A.3. If YES:

Please tell us who died – What was their relationship to the household head? Were they male or female? How old were they when they died? When did they die (year and season)? What contribution were they making to the household's work? What was the cause of their death?

How related to household head? *(write code)* *(15)*	Male / Female *(circle one)* M F *(16)*	Age at death *(age in complete years)* *(17)*	Year of death *(write year)* *(18)*	Season of death *(write code)* *(19)*	Cause of death *(write code)* *(20)*
	1 2				
	1 2				
	1 2				
	1 2				
	1 2				
	1 2				
	1 2				
	1 2				

Codes: Relationship to household head

01 = household head
02 = wife
03 = son / daughter of head or wife
04 = son-in-law / daughter-in-law
05 = grandson / granddaughter
06 = father / mother of head or wife
07 = brother / sister of head / wife
08 = other relative of head/ wife
09 = adopted
10 = non-relative / servant

Note:

If less than one year old at time of death (including died at birth), write "00".

Codes: Season

1 = Gu
2 = Hagaa
3 = Deyr
4 = Jilaal
5 = Don't know

Codes: Cause of death

01 = long illness (>3 months)
02 = short illness (<3 months)
03 = died in childbirth (women / infants)
04 = accident
05 = snake bite or wild animals
06 = malnutrition
07 = famine
08 = conflict between clans
09 = conflict within the clan
10 = conflict between individuals
11 = other type of conflict
12 = landmine explosion
13 = old age
14 = other: _____

A.3. CHILD IMMUNISATION

(21) Do you have a card on which vaccinations *(tallaal)* for your children are written down? Yes: 1 No: 2

If YES, record the details from the vaccination card for each child born in the last five years.

Type of Vaccination	*(22)* Child 1			*(23)* Child 2			*(24)* Child 3			*(25)* Child 4			*(26)* Child 5		
	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year
BCG															
Polio															
OPV 0															
OPV 1															
OPV 2															
OPV 3															
DPT															
DPT 1															
DPT 2															
DPT 3															
Measles															

If **NO** vaccination card:

Child	*(27)* Did the child receive any vaccinations to prevent them from getting diseases?	*(28)* If YES, how many times? *(write the number)*	Please tell me if your children under 5 years old received any of the following vaccinations: *(29)* A BCG vaccination against TB, that is, an injection in the left arm that caused a scar?	*(30)* Polio vaccine (drops in the mouth)? If YES, how many times?	*(31)* When was the first polio vaccine given, just after birth or later?	*(32)* DPT vaccination (an injection given at the same time as the polio drops)? If YES, how many times?	*(33)* An injection to prevent measles?
Child 1	1 2 3		1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3
Child 2	1 2 3		1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3
Child 3	1 2 3		1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3
Child 4	1 2 3		1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3
Child 5	1 2 3		1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3
	1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Don't know		1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Don't know	1 = Yes, 1 time 2= Yes, 2 times 3 = Yes, 3 times 4 = Yes, 4 times 5 = No – 0 times	1 = Just after birth 2 = Later 3 = No polio vaccine	1 = Yes, 1 time 2= Yes, 2 times 3 = Yes, 3 times 4 = No – 0 times 5 = Don't know	1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Don't know

B. HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

Next, I'd like to ask you how your household makes its living.

- In the last 12 months (between now and the same month last year), which types of work or activity did the members of your household do, in order to earn food and income?
- Who worked at each activity?
- Is this activity seasonal or permanent (all year round)?
- For every month worked on this activity, approximately how much income was earned?

Livelihood Activity	Did anyone in your household do this activity in the last year? *(Circle one only)* *(34)*		Which member of household does it? *(Circle all that apply)* *(35)*				Average income earned per month *(37)*	Currency *(write code)* *(38)*
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION								
Rearing & selling animals (camels, cattle, sheep, goats)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Selling dairy products (milk, butter, ghee, cheese)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Selling meat (from own livestock)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Selling hides and skins (from goats, sheep, cattle)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Selling wool (from sheep)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Rearing chickens	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Selling eggs (from own chickens)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Beekeeping (selling honey, bees-wax, or bee-hives)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
CROP FARMING								
Cereal food crops (sorghum, maize, wheat, barley)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Root crops (Irish potato, sweet potato)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Pulses (beans, cow-pea, chick-pea)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Oil crops (sesame, sunflower)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Fruits (mango, papaya, banana, orange, lemon, etc.)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Vegetables (onion, tomato, cabbage, pumpkin, etc.)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Khat	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
SALE OF NATURAL PRODUCTS								
Charcoal	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Firewood	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Water	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Precious stones (gold, gem-stones)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Incense, frankincense, and natural gum (myrrh)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Wild fruits *(gob, yicib,* etc.)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Animal feed (grass, fodder, forage, salty sand, etc.)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Construction materials (sand, grass, wooden poles, etc)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
EMPLOYMENT / LABOUR								
Salaried job (specify:_____)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Daily labourer	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Farm worker	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Animal herder	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
House-maid (domestic servant)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Restaurant or hotel worker	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Military service	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Construction worker (masonry)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Carpenter, Furniture-maker, or Metal-worker	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
TRADING (buying and selling)								

Livelihood Activity	Did anyone in your household do this activity in the last year? *(Circle one only)* *(34)*		Which member of household does it? *(Circle all that apply)* *(35)*				Average income earned per month *(37)*	Currency *(write code)* *(38)*
Livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, camels)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Livestock products (hides, butter, etc.)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Food crops (grains, pulses, vegetables)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Other foods (sugar, flour, coffee, etc.)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Clothes and shoes	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Building materials and hardware	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Contraband	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Khat	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Other commodities	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
CRAFTS / SMALL INDUSTRY								
Basket-making, Mat-making	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Weaving, Knitting, Embroidery, Tailoring	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Making traditional utensils or farm tools	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Henna (decoration)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Pottery	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Making jewellery	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
SERVICES								
Water-carrier, Porter	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Counsellor (disputes, marriage)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Barber or Hairdresser	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Musician (drum-beater, singer, dancer)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Religious teacher (Koranic)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Circumciser	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Traditional healer	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Traditional birth attendant (TBA)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
RENTS								
House rent	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Farm-land rent or Sharecropping	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Renting out animals (for transport or farming)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Renting out wheelbarrow	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Cart (donkey-cart, horse-cart, etc.)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
FOOD & DRINK PROCESSING								
Selling tea, coffee, cake, bread	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Selling fruit juice (orange, etc) or soft drink (Fanta, etc)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Selling cooked food	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
OTHER (write name of activity)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Begging	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Other:	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		
Other:	Yes	No	1	2	3	4		

C. CROP FARMING

(38) Do you (or any other member of your household) own any land? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(39) Did you (or any member of your household) farm during the last farming season? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

If "NO", go to page 8.

(40) If "YES", please tell us about the land you used for farming, and land you rented out or sharecropped to others.

Access to Land	Yes	No	If "Yes", how many *Qodi? [or other unit]* *(count land for all household members)*
Farmed own land	1	2	
Sharecropped in land *(Shirkad)*	1	2	
Rented in land *(Kiro)*	1	2	
Free access to someone's land	1	2	
Sharecropped out land	1	2	
Rented out land	1	2	
Gave land to someone for free	1	2	

(41) Is your farm situated in a favourable site (e.g. at a valley bottom)? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(42) Do you use *mangat* or *moos* to improve the farm's potential? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(43) Do you have permanent water for farming purposes in the vicinity? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(44) Do you use *birkas* to irrigate your crops? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(45) Do you use any water works or wells to irrigate your crops? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(46) Do you use fertiliser on your crops to improve your farm's productivity? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(47) Do you use animal manure on your crops to improve your farm's productivity? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(48) Do you have enough land for farming? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(49) For each crop grown, write the amount harvested in the most recent season, and what they did with the harvest.

Crop	Sacks harvested	Kilograms per sack	Total kilograms harvested	How many sacks were:			For each sack sold:	
				Eaten at home	Given away	Sold	Price per sack	Currency
Maize								
Sorghum								
Beans								
Sesame								
Chat								
Tomatoes								
Onions								
Other: _____								

(51) How does this year's harvest compare to previous years? *(circle one per column)*

Harvest Condition	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	10 years ago	If recent harvests are worse than harvests in past years, why?
Good Harvest	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Normal Harvest	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Poor Harvest	3	3	3	3	3	3	
Crop Failure	4	4	4	4	4	4	
Did not farm at that time	5	5	5	5	5	5	

D. LIVESTOCK

I want to ask you about the conditions of pasture and water for your animals, also access to livestock markets and veterinary services. For each issue, state whether the situation during the past year has been "excellent", "good", "adequate", "poor" or "very poor". If you have no opinion or no information about this issue, say "don't know".

[Try to get the respondent to give a short answer. If he or she gives a long explanation, listen carefully, and then summarise their explanation in one of the answers in the table below. Ask the respondent if this is the correct summary of their explanation, then circle the appropriate number. Then ask them to compare the situation now with the situation at the same time last year.]

Livestock Issues	*(52)* What is the situation like right now? *(circle one only)*	*(53)* How is the situation now compared to the same time last year? *(circle one only)*
How is the access to pasture for animals?	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4
How is the quality of pasture for animals?	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4
How is the availability of water for animals?	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4
How is the access to veterinary services?	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4
How is the access to drugs for livestock?	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4
	1= Excellent 2= Good 3= Adequate 4= Poor 5= Very poor 6= Don't know	1= Getting better 2= Getting worse 3= No change 4= Don't know

(54) As of today, how many of each different kind of livestock does your household own?
Please include any animals that belong to you, but are being raised by other households.

Livestock Type	Number owned by your household today						
	More than 100	51 – 100	21 – 50	11 – 20	6 – 10	1 – 5	0
Camels: Female *(Hal)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Camels: Male *(Awr)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Camels: Young Female *(Nirga)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Camels: Young Male *(Qurba)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cattle: Mature Female *(Sac)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cattle: Male bulls *(Dibi)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cattle: Female *(Qalmo)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cattle: under 1 year *(Weilo)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Goats *(Riyo)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sheep *(Ido)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Donkeys *(Damer)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mules *(Baqal)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Horses *(Faras)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Poultry *(Digag)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(55) How has the number of livestock owned by your household changed during the past 10 years? *(write number owned for each)*

Change in livestock numbers	Camels	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Donkey	Mules	Horses
One year ago (2004)							
Two years ago (2003)							
Five years ago (after the 2000 drought)							
Ten years ago (around 1995)							

(56) If the number owned has **decreased** during the last ten years (since 1995), what are the reasons? *(circle all that apply)*

Reasons for decrease	Camels	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Donkey	Mules	Horses
Conflict *	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Raiding *	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Died in drought	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Disease **	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Poisoned	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sold for food	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sold (not for food)	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Ate at home	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Lent out to somebody	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Stolen	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Lost	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Eaten by wild animal (e.g. hyena)	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Charity *(Zakaat)*	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Contribution *(Qaadhaan)*	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Dowry payment *(Yarad)*	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Offering *(Allah bari)*	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Compensation payment *(mag)*	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Other ***	17	17	17	17	17	17	17

* If "**Conflict**" or "**Raiding**", what happened?

** If "**Disease**", what is the name of the disease, or the symptoms?

*** If "**Other**", please be specific:

E. WATER

What is your main source of water for drinking and cooking, by season? *(circle one per column)*
What is your main source of water for livestock, by season? *(circle one per column)*
What does it cost you to use this water, in birr?

Source of water	Rainy season		Dry season	
	People (drinking, cooking) *(57)*	Livestock (drinking) *(58)*	People (drinking, cooking) *(59)*	Livestock (drinking) *(60)*
River	1	1	1	1
Pond or lake (open access)	2	2	2	2
Pond or lake (fenced)	2	2	2	2
Borehole	3	3	3	3
Birkas	4	4	4	4
Shallow well	5	5	5	5
Rainwater harvesting	5	5	5	5
Tap	6	6	6	6
Other (*specify*): _____ _____	7	7	7	7

(61) How much do you pay for each source of water each time you use it? *(Write the amount in birr. If no payment is needed, write "0".)*

Unit for purchased water *(e.g. 200-litre barrel)*

How many barrels of water do you normally buy in one week during the dry season?

F. HEALTH & EDUCATION

(61) Is there a health clinic in your community? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

If there is no health clinic in your community, how far is it to the nearest health clinic? *(write distance in kilometres)*

(62) Is there a Quranic school in your community? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

Is there a formal school in your community? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

If there is no formal school in your community, how far is it to the nearest formal school? *(write distance in kilometres)*

Are any of your children attending school? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

If NO, why not? (1)_____

(2)_____

(3)_____

G.1. INFORMAL TRANSFERS

In the last 12 months (between now and the same month last year), has your household **received** any of the following types of assistance from anyone outside the household?

If YES, who gave you this help – a relative, friend or neighbour, or someone else?

Where does the person live – in your community, or somewhere else?

Type of Transfer	Yes	No	From whom? *(circle as many as apply)*	Where do they live? *(circle as many as apply)*
(63)	*(64)*		*(65)*	*(66)*
Remittances (from relative living elsewhere)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Zakaat	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Other cash gift (e.g. Sadaqa)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Cash loan (no interest)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Food or grain gift	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Grain loan (no interest)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Seed gift	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Seed loan	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Free labour	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Free use of oxen or plough	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Free use of pack animals (camels or donkeys)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Xoolo goyn (restocking of poorer relatives)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Ciyi (distribution of meat to neighbours after a slaughter takes place)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Alabari / Sab (sacrifice made to feed the poor)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Dhibaad (cash or kind gift to married daughters when they visit parents or relatives)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Kaalo (gift of livestock to newly-weds)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Irmaansi / Maal (donation or loan of milking animals to a relative or friend)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Yarad (dowry given to bride's parents)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Qaadhan (donations of cash or animals to disaster stricken people)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Diiya (blood money – compensation)	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Other:	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Other:	1	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Codes: From whom?
1 = relative
2 = friend or neighbour
3 = trader
4 = moneylender
5 = other

Codes: Where do they live?
1 = in the same community
2 = elsewhere in rural Somali Region
3 = elsewhere in rural Ethiopia
4 = Jijiga town
5 = other urban centres in Ethiopia
6 = neighbouring Somali countries
7 = the Middle East
8 = the West (e.g. UK or US)
9 = other: _____

G.2. ACCESS TO SUPPORT NETWORKS

(67) If your household had a problem and needed money or food urgently, would you be able to get it from people in your community or from relatives? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(68) How many people do you think you could ask for this kind of help (money or food)? *(write number, or 00 if none)*

(69) If someone in your household fell ill or was injured, and you needed help with work, would you be able to get it from people in your community or from relatives? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(70) How many people do you think you could ask for this kind of help (with work)? *(write number, or 00 if none)*

H. FORMAL TRANSFERS

In the past 12 months, which types of assistance did your household receive from government or aid agencies?

Food aid		Food-for-Work project		Cash-for-Work project		Faffa *(special food)*		Free cash		Seeds & Tools		Credit from NGO		Livestock	
(71)		*(72)*		*(73)*		*(74)*		*(75)*		*(76)*		*(77)*		*(78)*	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2

How many times in the last three years has your household received food aid or gone for food-for-work? How much food aid did you receive each time? What did you do with this food?

Year	How many times did you receive food aid? *(write number)* (79)	How much food did you receive each time? *(write amount)* (80)	What did you do with the food aid? *(write code)* (81)
This year (2005)			
Last year (2004)			
Two years ago (2003)			

Note: If no food aid was received by this household in any year, write "0" next to each year.

Note: Specify the units (e.g. 10 kg).

1 = Sold all food aid for cash
2 = Sold some food aid and consumed the rest
3 = Gave all food aid away to others who needed it more
4 = Gave some food aid away and consumed the rest
5 = Gave all food aid to others as a payment for something
6 = Gave some food aid as a payment, consumed the rest
7 = Consumed all food aid
8 = Gave it to livestock for feed
9 = Other (*specify*): _____
_____

I. COPING STRATEGIES

(82) During drought and other livelihood shocks, how does your household survive?
[Note: This question is about unusual behaviour, not what the household normally does to get its food in a good year.]

Coping strategy	Yes	No	Coping strategy	Yes	No
Eat less food (smaller portions)	1	2	Fishing for food	1	2
Collect bush products to sell to buy food	1	2	Rent out land	1	2
Collect wild fruits for food	1	2	Sell land	1	2
Hunting (gazelle, dik-dik, etc.)	1	2	Sell other assets to buy food	1	2
Migrate to urban areas to find work	1	2	Save fodder for sale	1	2
Go to IDP camp in Somali Region	1	2	Rely on handicraft	1	2
Flee to neighbouring countries	1	2	Sell firewood	1	2
Borrow food or cash to purchase food	1	2	Sell charcoal	1	2
Rely on help from relatives and friends	1	2	Begging	1	2
Reduce the number of meals per day	1	2	Smuggling / contraband	1	2
Rent out animals (donkey, camel)	1	2	Send children to work	1	2
Reduce spending on non-food items	1	2	Other *(specify):*		

G.3. ZAKAAT

(83) When was the last time you paid *zakaat?*

(84) How much did you pay?

Year	*(circle one only)*	How much did you pay? Cash	Camels	Cattle	Sheep & Goats	Crops (Rice, Maize, etc.)
Last year (2004)	1					
Two years ago (2003)	2					
Three years ago (2002)	3					
Four years ago (2001)	4					
More than four years ago	5					
Never paid any *zakaat*	6					

(85) When was the last time you received *zakaat?*

(86) How much did you receive?

Year	*(circle one only)*	How much did you receive? Cash	Camels	Cattle	Sheep & Goats	Crops (Rice, Maize, etc.)
Last year (2004)	1					
Two years ago (2003)	2					
Three years ago (2002)	3					
Four years ago (2001)	4					
More than four years ago	5					
Never received any *zakaat*	6					

J. IMPACTS OF CONFLICT

(87) Since the fall of Mengistu in 1991, how has conflict affected your family's livelihood? *(circle one only)*

Very seriously	1
Quite seriously	2
Not very seriously	3
Not at all	4

(88) Has any member of your family been injured, or lost their life, due to conflict? *(circle all that apply)*

Someone was injured slightly	1
Someone was seriously injured	2
Someone lost their life	3
No injury or loss of life	4

(89) Have you lost or recovered any livestock, granary stocks or property to raids or conflict? *(circle all that apply)*

	Lost	*Eshanay*
1-10 animals	1	1
11-50 animals	2	2
More than 50 animals	3	3
Granary stocks	4	4
Movable property	5	5
None of the above	6	6

(90) Have you lost or gained any access to water, grazing, or farmland because of raids or conflict? *(circle all that apply)*

	Lost	*Eshanay*
Grazing land	1	1
Farmland	2	2
Birka	3	3
Wells	4	4
Other water sources	5	5
None of the above	6	6

(91) The last time there was any conflict that affected your community, who was involved? *(circle all that apply)*

Within sections of the clan	1
Within the woreda	2
Between other clans	3
Between other woredas	4
Between our clan and another clan	5
Between government and clans	6
Between militias and clans	7
Bandits	8
No conflict	9

(92) Who were the main beneficiaries of that conflict? *(circle all that apply)*

Militias	1
Bandits	2
Politicians	3
Government officials	4
Clan elders	5
No conflict	6
Other *(specify):*	7

(93) Who do you turn to in cases of conflict or trouble, to solve the problem? *(circle all that apply)*

Family members		1
Elders		2
Amakaris (Gurti)		3
Woreda administration		4
Police		5
Militia		6
Regional representatives		7
Other	*(specify):*	8

_____

(99) What are your relationships with neighbouring groups at this time? *(circle all that apply)*

Good	1
Stable	2
Tense	3
Conflict	4

(94) Have you paid any compensation due to conflict with other families or clans? Yes: 1 No: 2

(95) If YES, what was decided to be your household's share *(hagaag)* of the compensation to pay?

(96) Have you received any compensation due to conflict with other families or clans? Yes: 1 No: 2

(97) If YES, what compensation did you receive?

(98a) Is there any land that you used to use for grazing or farming, but you don't use it any more? Yes 1 No 2

If YES, why don't you use that land any more?

(98b) Is there any water point that you used to use, but you don't use it any more? Yes 1 No 2

If YES, why don't you use that water point any more?

(100) Do you feel that you are fairly and adequately represented in local, regional, and federal governments? *(circle one for each level)*

Level of Government	Yes	No	Don't know
Local	1	2	3
Regional	1	2	3
Federal	1	2	3

(101) Are your representatives effective in representing you at local, regional and federal levels? *(circle one for each level)*

Level of Government	Yes	No	Don't know
Local	1	2	3
Regional	1	2	3
Federal	1	2	3

K. Food Security

(102) During the last Jilaal season, did your household suffer any shortage of food to eat? *(circle one)* Yes 1 No 2

(103) During the worst month last year, how many times a day did the adults and children in your household eat?

	Number of meals per day *(circle one for each row)*
Adults	0 1 2 3 4
Children *(= school-age / working, not infants)*	0 1 2 3 4

Code: 0 = sometimes passed a whole day without eating anything

L. Clothing & Basic Items

(103) During the past 3 years, how many times has your household bought clothes for adults and for children? *(circle one per row)*

New clothes	Number of times
New clothes for adults	0 1 2 3 4 or more
New clothes for children	0 1 2 3 4 or more
Second-hand clothes for adults	0 1 2 3 4 or more
Second-hand clothes for children	0 1 2 3 4 or more

(104) Do you have the following items in your house now? *(circle one per row)*

Items	Yes	No
Salt *(Cusbo* or *Milix)*	1	2
Sugar *(Sonkor*)	1	2
Tea-leaves *(Caleen shah)*	1	2
Kerosene *(Gaas)*	1	2

M. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF HOUSEHOLD SITUATION

Considering all the questions discussed in this interview, how would you describe the situation of your household now?

- Are you able to meet your household needs by your own efforts?
- Are you making any extra for stores, savings or investments (e.g. buying livestock or other assets, improving your land)?
- Do you sometimes need help from your community, or from government or other agencies?
- Are you dependent on this help? (Could you survive without it?)

Choose the category in column 97 that best fits the respondents' answers. Then say, 'So would you agree that at this time your household is ..... *(read category description)*?' *If they do not agree, discuss further and identify the category they agree with. When they agree, circle the corresponding code for 'Now' (column 98).*

Then ask: At the same time (same month) last year, was your household situation better, the same, or worse? *Repeat the questions if necessary, read the category that best fits the respondents' description of their situation a year ago, and when they agree circle the code in column 99.*

Repeat for 2 years ago (column 100), 4-5 years ago (column 101), and 10 years ago (column 102).

Self-Assessment Categories	Now (2005)	The same time last year (2004)	The same time two years ago (2003)	4-5 years ago (1999 / 2000) *(During drought emergency)*	10 years ago (1994) *(After the fall of Mengistu in 1991)*
	(circle one)	*(circle one)*	*(circle one)*	*(circle one)*	*(circle one)*
(105)	*(106)*	*(107)*	*(108)*	*(109)*	*(110)*
was not yet formed at that time		0	0	0	0
ble to meet household needs by your own efforts, making some extra for stores, savings and	1	1	1	1	1
ble to meet household needs, but with nothing to save or invest	2	2	2	2	2
anaging to meet household needs, but only by and / or sometimes	3	3	3	3	3
dependent on support from community or	4	4	4	4	4

N. Livelihood Problems

(111) What are the most serious problems that your household faces in making a living?
(Probe until they mention three problems. Write whatever they say, with direct quotations if possible.)

1

2

3

O. Food Consumption

(112) Have you eaten these foods at home in the last week?

Food	Yes	No	If YES, where did you get this food? *(circle all that apply)*			
	(circle one only)		Own Production or Own Livestock	Purchased	Food Aid	Gift *(from Relative or Friend)*
Sorghum	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maize	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rice	1	2	3	4	5	6
Barley	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pasta	1	2	3	4	5	6
Wheat	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bread	1	2	3	4	5	6
Beans	1	2	3	4	5	6
Meat	1	2	3	4	5	6
Milk	1	2	3	4	5	6
Eggs	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fish	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vegetables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fruit	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

P. Changes in Livelihood Activities

(113) Did you or any member of your household ever do any livelihood activity in the past that you do not do anymore? *(circle one)* Yes: 1 No: 2

(114) If YES, what was that livelihood activity?

_____

(115) Why did you or your relative stop doing it? *[Only answer if question 113 was YES.]*

_____

_____

_____

_____

(116) Did your father/mother do the same livelihood activity that you are doing now? Yes: 1 No: 2

(117) If NO, what different livelihood activity did he do?

_____

(118) Why do you not follow the same livelihood activity as your father? *[Only answer if question 116 was NO.]*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank the respondent for his or her time. Then fill in the "End time" on page 1.

Glossary

aabsi fear and tension caused by general insecurity and the possibility of conflict erupting between specific different groups or (sub-)clans

'aw a type of grass used to make mats and for roofing huts

birka constructed water reservoirs (plural is *berkad*)

Birr Ethiopian currency

faffa supplementary food for young children

hagaag compensation payment

Haud or *Hawd* dry bush in the plains areas; refers to districts to the south of the Ethiopia – Somaliland border (including Harshin, Aware, Gashamo) that were called the "reserve area" during the postWorld War II British administration

iskutab sharecropping

kebele administrative sub-district in Ethiopia (Amharic)

khat a mild stimulant (*catha edulis*) commonly chewed in the Horn of Africa

moos furrow for channelling water to a farmed patch of land (*mangat* in Amharic)

qamadi wheat – has become a popular but derogatory term for food aid wheat

qharan contribution of food or animals to relatives)

qodi unit of land in Somali Region (8 *qodi* equals one hectare)

rer a pastoralist settlement or encampment in Somali Region

sadaqa cash gift

shoats sheep and goats

woreda administrative district in Ethiopia (Amharic)

Seasons in Somali Region

Deyr short rains (October–December)

Gu' long rains (April–June)

Hagaa or *Hagar* dry season (July–September)

Jilaal hot dry season (January–March)

Karan third rainy season (August–September) in northern Somali Region

Droughts and famines in Somali Region

Abarti daba deer "long-tailed" – a drought that lasted for two years (1974–5)

Barbar "inflammation" or "swelling" – those affected had swollen bellies and necks (1992)

Sima "the equaliser" – a term applied to the Gode drought-famine (1999/2000)

Tuur ku Qaat "carry on your back" – with even pack animals such as camels dying, people had to transport things themselves (2004)

Community coping strategies

Allah bari or *sab* sacrifice made to feed the poor

awino food cooked for the poor

ayitu charitable contributions

ciyi distribution of slaughtered meat to neighbours, usually immediately after a slaughter takes place

dhibaad cash or kind to married daughters when they visit parents/relatives

goob free labour provided to relatives or friends

guus Assistance provided in farming communities, taking the form of a loan of oxen for ploughing, farming instruments, or casual labour. The beneficiary provides lunch/tea, or *khat* to those assisting.

hagaag share of compensation payment

irmaansi animal loaned to a relative for milking for a certain period

ischar women's contributions to another woman in need

jiisin traditional restocking mechanism, found especially in Shinile District

kaalo gift of livestock to newly married couples

maal donation or loan of milking animals to next of kin, neighbour or friend

nisaab the minimum level of income or wealth before *zakaat* is payable

qaadhaan donations made in cash or animals to disaster stricken people

xoolo goyn restocking of poorer relatives

yarad dowry – given to the parents of the bride

zakaat Third Pillar of Islam, an obligatory redistribution system whereby the better-off provide support to the poor in cash or in kind (livestock or crops)

Somali informal institutions

Ayuto informal savings and credit groups

Dia the *Dia* paying group is an important institution that all Somalis must belong to. It acts as a form of social insurance, as the group accepts responsibility for the action of its members who are collectively bound to pay blood money. Access to water, wells and pasture is availed freely to all members of the group. *Dia* is Arabic, but widely used; *Mag* has the same meaning, in Somali.

Gurti Elders Advisory Council in Somali Region; also the Elders Council in Somaliland that forms the Upper Chamber of Parliament. *Amakari*, an Amharic word for the same council, is sometimes used in Somali Region

Xeer Somali customary law

Note on spelling

Somali place names have several spellings. Often 'k' and 'q' are interchangeable, as in Fiq or Fik, or Kebribayah or Qabribeyah (and many other variations). The capital of Somali Region is sometimes spelt as Jigjiga and sometimes as Jijiga. In this report, Somali spellings will be preferred; for example, *khat* is Somali, while *chat* is Amharic and *qat* is Arabic.

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